

THE REVWARD OF RELIGION.

Delivered in sundry Lectures vpon
the Booke of Ruth, wherein the godly may
see their dayly both inward & outward
trials, with the presence of God to as-
sist them, & his mercies to re-
compence them.

Verie profitable for this present time of
dearth, wherein many are most pittifully
tormented with want; and also worthy to bee
considered in this Golden age of the prea-
ching of the worde, when some vo-
mit vp the loathsomnes ther-
of, and others fal away
to damnable
securitie.

L V C. 12. 32.

*Feare not little flock, for it is your fathers will
so give you a kingdom.*

Ciprian in the end of the 6. Epist. lib. 4.
Deerely beloued brethren, let this be rooted in your hearts, let this
be the preparation of our weapons, let this bee your Medita-
tion day and night, to set before your eyes and consider
with mind and senses, the punishments of the wicked with the
rewards & deserts of the righteous: what penaltie he threat-
neth to them that denie him, and what glorie he promiseth to
them which confesse him.

Seene and allowed.

L O N D O N.

Printed by Iohn Windet. 1597.

TO THE EDITOR

OF THE

NEW YORK TIMES

NEW YORK, N. Y.

DEAR SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,

Yours very truly,

J. M. [Signature]

[Name]

[Address]

[City]

[State]

[Country]

[Post Office]

[Telephone]

[Telex]

[Cable]

[Fax]

[E-mail]



TO THE RIGHT
Honourable, vertuous and
Christian Lady, the Lady Mar-
garet, Baaronnesse Dacres of the
South, grace, mercie and peace,
be multiplied in this life pre-
sent, and eternall felici-
tie in the life
to come.

Right Honourable La-
die: it is reported that
the inhabitantes of the
mountaine Cassius by
Seleucia, at the third
watch of the night doe
beholde the Globe of the
Sunne: so that on the
one side they see our accustomed darkenesse, co-
uering the face of the whole earth; on the other
side the glistering beames of the shining light,
display-

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displaying the shadow of the nightly darkenes. In my opinion this hill doth verie fitly resemble the excellencie of the word of God, and the inhabitantes thereof, the professors of Religion: for long since the Sun of righteousness, the Sonne of God, departed from the sight of the world, and declined like the Sunne of the firmament; hath left the vniuersall Orbe of the whole earth in palpable darkenes. Yet to vs living in this world, the beames of his brightnesse, the light of his spirit, the power of his person, and the glory of his godhead, is most euidently manifested by the scriptures and preaching of his holy worde: so that there wee behold infinite thousands walking in darkenes, and standing on the left hande of God ready for damnation: but here wee see a few persons, professors of Religion, like the men of Cassius, living in the sight and presence of our Sauiour, (whom they behold shining in the Scriptures) and standing on the right hande waiting for saluation. For this cause, the voyce of the eternall God soundeth so of ten vnto vs in the scriptures, that wee were vnder the prince of darkenesse, that wee were darkened in our cogitation, that it was night, but now the day starre from on high hath visited vs, and therefore we must cast away the deedes of darknesse, and put on the armour of light and the

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Scriptures euery where testifie, that the church of God is in the topp of the mountaines, meaning that the dignitie of our calling, as farre excelleth the fancies of the world, as the hills arise aboue the vallies of the earth. This is the infallible word of life, and all the writings of men are but the Apes hereof: from hence they hearde of their Golden ages, their fearefull wonders, their strange inuentions, and their incredible fictions which they haue broched concerning heauen and earth. When Ptolomeus Philadelphus, king of Egypt, buylded his famous Librarie, and had furnished it with all the wrytinges of the heathen, hee also by Ambassadors to the high priest in Iudah, obtayned the old Testament, and sixe men of euery tribe, to Translate it out of Hebrewe into Greeke: then Demetrius Phalereus, one of the Schollers of Theophrastus, certified the king, that among all the writings of their learned Philosophers, they onely were Diuine, and the Caelestiall Oracles of the euerlasting God. For their truth the secrete nature of euery hart is forced to confesse; for their substance, it is altogether occupied on heauenly thinges; for their sinceritie, it is established in the promise of him, who neuer chaungeth, for their stilenceither the principles of Plato, the demonstrations of Aristotle

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tle, the inuentions of Hippocrates, the sleights of Carneades, the exclamations of Cicero, or the conceytes of Seneca, were vttered in so plaine eloquence or commendable phrases, as the Scriptures of our saluation. Also if your Ho. consider the often changes of the lawes of godlesse Gentiles, you shall perceiue that they haue had as many Religions as generations: but you shall finde that we haue now the Religion of Adam, the faith of Enoch, the Arke of Noah, the sacrifice of Abraham, and all the true worship of God, as the Church possessed it, many thousande yeares agoe: and all because the rule hereof, the heauenly word of God remaineth for euer. Lycurgus the best law-maker that euer was among the Gentiles, when he saw his lawes to be amended of the Spartaines, for very grieffe thereof famished himselfe at Crissa. The lawes which Papius & Iulius gaue to the Romanes, were disanulled by Seuerus, the Emperour: al the world erreth, some one way, and some another, mutually condemning each others superstition; onely the church of God, in euery age retayned one God, one faith, one Baptisme, and one substance of Religion, because it followeth one voyce of the hoij Ghost speaking in the Scriptures. It were infinite to set downe all the commoditie wee receiue by this heauenly writing

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ing. By it our manners are mollified, our minds instructed, our liues blessed, and we deliuered from Atheisme, Paganisme, and Papisme: Atheisme denieth all thinges, Paganisme corrupteth all thinges, and Papisme confoundeth all thinges, therefore by the worde of God, wee are freed from doubting the truth, deceiuing our owne soules, and confounding Religion. And because this requireth some prooffe, I beseech your Ho. to beare with my tediousnesse, while I manifest my minde so briefly as I may, omitting Atheisme fitter for dogges to beleene, then men to professe, I will briefly declare, how the Gentiles, (such as wee were before the worde wrought our calling,) haue falsified the whole Scripture and corrupted the tradition thereof with the inuentions of their owne Poets? and how the Papists are but confounders of Heathenisme, heresie and Christianitie. First to begin with the Gentiles, while reason and nature enforced them to confesse a God, (which is onely and truly learned in the scriptures,) they imagined a multitude of gods and Goddeses; in the scriptures wee finde the mention hereof, that euerie nation had a peculiar God. The Zidonians and Sirians had Astaroth, or as some call him Astartes, the Moabites had Chemosh: the Ammonites had Milcom or Moloch;

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the Babilonians Bel, the Philistines Dagon, the Egyptians worshipped many beastes, but especially a sheepe: among other writers, wee find it at the Athenians, had Apollo and Minerua, the Boetian Thebes, Bacchus and Hercules, Carthage had Iuno, Cyprus and Paphus, Venus, Rhodes Apollo, Tanarus, Neptune, the Creetes, and Ephesians, Diana, the Romaines Mars, the Italians, Ianus, the Arabians Diasares, The Germanes Tibelenus the men of Affrique Coelestus, and the Moores haue worshipped the gouernours of their Countrie. Thus they turned the glory of the incorruptible God into the similitude of corruptible creatures, as birdes, beastes, fishes and serpentes, and wandred without God while they framed to themselves a multitude of Gods, and the best they could inuent, were sinfull and abhominable wretches, such as exceeded al others in notorious crimes, as I could easily shew, if it wear to my purpose: & moreouer they haue forsaken not onely the true God, but haue blotted the names of their most famous men leauing the worthiest in hel, and lifting the worst into heauen. For might not they as well made Socrates a God for his wisedome, whom Apollo himselfe honoured with this Oracle: Pantoon Androon Socrates Sophotatos, of al men Socrates

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crates was the wisest: Aristides excelled them
all in iustice, Themistocles for warre, Alex-
ander in honour, Polycrates in felicitie, and
Demosthenes in eloquence: Who was more
graue then Cato, more valiant then Scipio,
more affable then Camillus, more excellent
then Iul. Cæsar, more happy then Sylla, more
wealthy then Crassus, or more religious then
Numa Pompilius? truly none among all
their Deuills, I would say goddes, with whome all
the nations of the earth haue committed forni-
cation. In latter times the Romaines had onely
power to consecrate goddes, as now the Pope and
his Cardinals doe challenge the same to Cano-
nize Saints. But would not the hearts of the
godly breake in sunder, to consider that euerie
Citie inuented a new God, yea euerie familie
had their householde goddes; committed Idol-
trie with birdes of the ayre, and beastes of the
earth, men and women, Moone and Starres,
Sunne and Angels, euen to the Asses head, as
commonly as the Serpent liueth on the dust, or
as greedily as the Lyon raueth when hee findeth
a pray. The studie of Astronomie verifieth
this, for they haue imagined signes from the
Eagle to the little birde, from the Lyon to the
little dogge, from the Whale to the little fish, and
from reasonable creatures to unreasonable
monsters:

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monsters: because they would haue some colour for their impietie, they translated their Idolls to be signes in heauen. But now when the light of the word of life once shined in the world, they perceyued their owne follies, renounced their olde errors and receyued the wholesome doctrine of the onely true and eternall God: for as the Lions runne at the sight of a firebrande, as the Cockatrice flieeth when shee saureth the Weasill, and the clouds flie away when the Northeren winde bloweth, so these subtilties of Satan being once discovered, through the simplicitie of the scriptures, they fall againe into the brest of the first Author, and I would to God they were for euer buried in his bottomlesse kingdom. Also that which wee finde in the word of God concerning the creation, the flood, the replenishing of the earth, the beginning or confusion of tongues, the destruction of Sodome and Gomorbe, the deliuerie of the Israelites from Egypt, the miracles of Moses and Aaron, the ouerthrow of the Cananites whome they call Phœnicians, the building of Salomons Temple, the scattering of the Tribes of Israell, the birth of Christ, the darkenesse at his death, and the preaching of the Apostles: they haue corrupted with fond Additions, wilfull deuises, intollerable blasphemies, ignorant relations, wicked

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ked subtractiones, and accursed deprauations, which if I should follow, I might make a large volume: onely thus much I will be bolde to say, that at the wisdom of the Gentiles was nothing but the doctrine of Devils, & that all the world before the comming of Christ, was without the true knowledge of God, the Iewes only excepted. The learned haue noted these fowre as the generall heades of auncient impietie, the first is Barbarisme wherein men liued vnder no guide, preserved no peace, followed no commendable kinde of life, but euerie one did that which pleased him, to the disgrace of mankinde, refusing onely that which was good, and altogether embracing that which was accursed. Then one satisfied another with bloody reuenge, making no more accompt of the life of a man then the blood of a beast; then they mingled themselues like brutish creatures in generation, brother with sister, father with daughter, and mother with her sonne, then their strength was their lawe, their desire was; their counsellour, their affections pleaded, their will gaue iudgement, and their mallice was the meanes to execute their cruelty. The second head or fountaine of falshoode among the Gentiles, is called Scythisme, because it was first practised among the Scythians a barbarous and cruell people, differing in nothing

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thing from the former, saue onely because they
had one gouernour or ruler, to whome they were
subiect, being at his commandement, to execute
right or wrong, to saue or kil, keeping peace with
none, but many times setting the children to
drinke the bloud of their own parents, and the
parentes to eate the flesh of their own children.
The third kind of falsehood which raigned a-
mong the Gentiles, for want of the word of God
is called Hellenisme, which consisteth in the
worship of Idoles, this began among the Greci-
ans, who are called in their own tongue Helle-
nes, and therefore was the superstition called
Hellenisme, this detestable canker so preuailed
that not onely the Grecians, Babilonians, Eryp-
tians, Sirians, Phanitians, Phrygians, and ma-
ny other nations were infected therewith, but
the Israelites the people of God were poysoned
therewith, which in the ende was their utter
subuersion, and this hath raigned a long time
in the Church of Rome, and in all those king-
domes, where shee could plant her chaire, which
all the godly doe perceiue will be her euerlasting
destruction. But this Hellenisme preuailed
mightily, for the space of two thousande yeares
vnder which time sprang all the sects of the
Philosophers: as the Pythagoreans, which
taught that men might not sacrifice to the gods
that

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that the soules of men departed dogo into other men, and also into bruit beastes, that whatsoeuer was aboue the Moane was immortall, with such like fantasies, and in the end this Pythagoras would be called a God. Next unto him arose the Platonists, who affirmed that the world was created of the Angels and little goddes that of one God there came many other goddes, that all women ought to be common and that no man ought to haue a wife peculiar to himselfe in a well ordered common-wealth. After these succeeded the Stoickes who affirmed this world to be God, that all flesh shall perish, and that the soules departed from one into another. Then also began the Epicures to growe like serpentes, borne onely to destroy other, they would haue all thinges to ende in pleasure, that there is no God or prouidence, that none are blessed but in this present life. And thus your H. may perceiue how miserable were those dayes, when men ranne headlong into, o great extremities, that their profession of wisdom was the confession of folly, & for al their light of lerning they groped in a Cimmerian darknes, being shadowed with ignorance like the Countrie Odesa in Greece, which by reason of mighty hils thereto adioyning, neuer felt the beames of the Sun. The fourth head or fountaine of vngodlines is called

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called Samaritanisme, of the Samaritans which mingled themselves with the profession of the Jewes, and receiued some part of the Bible; yet like the Anabaptistes of our daies, without any difference or conscience kept companie with Jewes and Gentiles. Of these came manie accursed sects, from whom sprang many detestable opinions, and thus the world labored with damnable deuises, while the Deuill laughed at their daily destruction; whereby this is euident, that Philosophie or Paganisme is the corruption of our Religion. But some peraduenture will obiekt vnto me, that they had very excellent and worthy men, who crowned their Countrie and kindred with endlesse memory. Mutius left his right hand on the Altar. Empedocles willingly cast himselfe into the burning flames of the mountaine Aetna. One of the builders of Carthage, to auoide a second marriage, cast herselfe into the burning graue. Regulus being freed from the Carthagenians, chused rather to suffer death himselfe in most cruel torments, then to discharge their prisoners at Rome. Menocæus, seeing his Cittie of the Thebes besieged by the Grecians, which they threatned to destroy, except one of them would giue himselfe for all, did ascend to the wall of the Cittie, and there pearcing his body with a sworde fell
dewne

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dead among his enemies, wherewith they contented departed. Alcestis the wife of Perilaus seeing (as shee supposed) the fiendes come for her husband, who lay sicke, slew herselfe, bidding them to take her shadowe and spare her husbands life. To speake nothing of Lucretia, Dyrachya, Aria, Cyane and many others, only let this suffice. Eleates being asked of Dionisius the tirant, what was better then Philosophy, answered death: whereupon he was commanded to be scourged to death, which for the defence of his speach, and contempt of death he most patiently endured. Yet Tertullian, a Christian father speaking of such like actions, hath these wordes, O lawfull commendation because humaine, to whome neither wilfull presumption, nor desperate perswasion is imputed, to whome it is permitted to die in contempte of death, and all manner of crueltie: to whome is giuen more libertie to suffer for his countrie, kingdome or friendes then for God. Who is hee that cannot with one eye espie the meaning of this father? Improving this kinde of death, as presumption or desperation which may neuer haue any harbour in the heartes of the faithfull, what shall wee then say of all these worthy persons? Surely whatsoever is not of faith is sinne, and without faith it is impossible to please God.

Wee

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We must not regard what man doth, but what God commaundeth, as the Emperour Constantine once saide, it is not death but the cause of death that deserueth commendation, as Agesilaus the best Grecian Prince that euer was was wont to say. The purest Adamant is not worne with iron, nor wasted with fire, yet a little Goates bloud will consume it: euen so if one man could suffer all the trials in the world and abide many thousande deathes by fire and torture, yet it shall no whit profite him, except the bloude of Iesus Christ loose the fetters of sin, and breake the chaines of the Deuill: now the mercies of God in Christ are not communicated to any, but to such as know them, and who can know them without the worde of God? This is the fountaine of water of life, and all other are but poysoned puddles, stinking more filthily in the presence of God then the Lake of Camarina in the nostrils of men. They reporte that in Sicilia there are two springes, whereof one will make a fruitfull woman barren, the other a barren woman fruitfull: if this were sa, I thinke al the world would haue recourse vnto it. Yet in this word of God, there is a greater commodity declared vnto vs, for here wee learne the true cause of baorennesse: which being known the disease is the more easily removed

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ned, here wee learne the meanes whereby it is
cured, as in Rebecca, Annah, Elizabeth and
others which might as easily bee practised, as
true religion vnfaignedly professed. Moreo-
uer they tell vs, that in Epyrus at the foote of
the hill Tomarus, there is a holy Well, which
of it selfe will kindle a Torch, being put vnto it
and quench it beeing brought burning thereto,
graunt this to bee true and it will represent vn-
to vs the nature of this holy wel the word of God,
which with the water of our Baptisme doth fire
our heartes by the holy Ghost, but comming
vnto it burning in the heate of our owne lust,
quencheth the flame of our owne concupiscence.
Also wee finde in Varro, that there are two
streames in Boetia, whereof if sheepe drinke,
the one turneth their colour into Russet, and
the other maketh them white againe, if this be
possible as all thinges are possible to the creatour
of the world, what maruaile though wee are re-
generated, (not new coloured) by the immor-
tall seede of his heauenly worde. Which are his
sheepe, and the corruptions of our nature so
washed in the same, that our garmentes of righ-
teousnesse are as white as snow in his presence.
Solinus telleth that at the Cittie of Debris a-
mong the Garamantes, there is a springe which
at the rising of the Sunne congealeth to yce,



but

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but at the setting thereof resolueth to water a-
gaine, which is contrary to all the worlde beside
freezing with heat, and thawing with colde:
yet wee may make this vse there f, that it is no
wonder to see our heavenly Well to worke these
contraries, to bee the sauour of life vnto life, or
else the sauour of death vnto death, that vnto
some it is a two edged sword to giue them mor-
tall woundes, vnto other a broad Target to de-
fende them from danger, that it wrought so ef-
fectually in the dayes of persecution, when it
was oppressed in darkenesse, but now freezeth
and hardneth in these dayes of peace, when the
sunne of prosperitie shineth to all. Surely as the
Albest stone once set on fire, can neuer bee quen-
ched, so if we could but once burn in loue vnfa-
inedly with the Gospell, our profession should not
be so luke warme, nor our deuotiō so smal in the
cause of religiō. And thus I haue bene bold with
your Ho. to proue my first assercion, wherein if
I haue beene too longe, let me craue pardon, and
I will promise greater breuitie in my seconde
proposition, which is this, that poperie is a con-
fusion of Heathenisme, Heresie and Christia-
nitie. And that I may methodically proceede, I
will beginne at their highest degree, and so in or-
der lightly touch so many thinges as may certifie
your Ho. of the truth of their Religion. Numa
appointed

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appointed one to be a high priest, at whose iudgement all temporall and spirituall thinges were administred, the same is retayned in the Church of Rome, for the pope obtayned of Phocas the Emperour and murderer of Mauriti-
us, that the Bishoppe of Rome might bee the heude of all Churches to whose iudgement all the world in spirituall matters must bee subiect, by which in time it came to this, that hee corrupted the whole Church of Christ, that hee got both swordes into his hande, and made himselfe a triple Crowne, after the manner of the late Roman Emperors, who had three Crownes at their inauguration; and as the triple lightning was the auncient of Iupiter, so the triple Crowne is the badge of the Pope, tho' ough the honour or terrour thereof, he threatneth what thunder-boltes hee pleaseth in the world. The Cabalister imagined two keyes whereby paradise was opened and shut: from hence the pope hath in his banner the crosse Keyes, telling vs that he hath power to open and shut paradise, for and against whome he pleaseth. Being thus exalted into the highest place, as it was reported the God Terminus would not gine place to Iupiter standing both in the Capitoll, no more the Pope giueth place to Christ although hee stande in the midst of his Church and sit at

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the right hand of his Father in heauen. For this cause, as the Emperours had their senate, so he hath his Cardinals, as the Egyptians bound the Priestes of Isis or Apis to liue in perpetuall virginittie: so he forceth the sacred shauelinges of his unholy seat, with the vowe of perpetuall chastitie, and that he might help their weaknesse in this behalfe, as Caligula suffered the whores of Rome in his dayes, so the popes haue graunted the tolleration of a Stewes, builded by a pope, Sixtus the fourth, which in shorte time so preuailed, that the pope receiued for Rents thereof forty thousande Duccates by the yeare. And Paule the thirde had the names of forty and fve thousand Tennantes belonging to that most filthy and damnable kinde of life. Furthermore hee furnished or rather poisoned the Church of Christ, with fryers, Munkes, Nunnes.. The fryers and munkes are the successors of the Essæan, Dosithæan, Nasachæan and Cynicall heretickes, which like these take vpon them the voves of wilfull pouertie, and perpetuall chastitie, placing their Religion in abstinence from meates, in outward and hypocriticall fasting, affirming that they are the successors and followers of the Apostles, like the heretiques called by Augustine Apostoliques, defending, that the Apostles lead a single life,
and

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*and had no wines, so these Romish heretiques
accompte Mariage but filthines, like the Mar-
cionites, Tatians, Adamites, Platonistes, and
Valesian heretiques, and are not ashamed to
make the holy Apostles of Christ breakers of wed-
locke, & wilful departers from their own wines
contrary to the writings of the Euangelistes &
Saint Paule. The Nunnes or women-Munks
are the naturall successors of the vestall virgins
instituted by Numa, and as these were dedica-
ted to Vesta, Apollo, Iuno Argiua, Diana,
& Minerua, so are the Romish Nuns to Mary
the mother of Christ, and other holy women.
Then also did he begin to dresse & adorne the
Temples with Images which he learned of the
Gentiles, as I haue already declared, and here-
in he ioyned with the Gnostickes and Basilidian
heretiques, who defended Images to bee lawfull
for Christian People, and as the Gentiles had
their sacrifices for the dead, called Inferiæ, so
he instituted prayers for the dead, least he should
seeme to want any thing, which hee should not
haue. Then also he tooke the Scriptures frō the
common people, least they should espie his lewd-
nes, and as Lys is the Pythagorean blamed one
of his fellowes for making knowne abroad their
Masters precepts, so hee blameth all those that
shall open the misteries of the Gospel to the com-*

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mon people, and as the Magitians of Persia were wont to sing to their Idols in a strange tongue, so the pope commaunded all thinges to be don in the Church in an unknowne language, wherein they also ioyne with the Basilidian heretiques who gaue this as a principle, that their misteries must be concealed and reuealed onely to a few beeing worse then the Pythagoreans, who commaunded but fise yeares silence to their Disciples, but the papistes keepe men all their liues from reading, speaking and conferring on the Scriptures. By this meanes he deceiued the world with iugling like the heretiques called Mirabilarii, and affirmed that faith commeth by nature, like the Basilidians and Gnostickes: they taught that euerie one that wold bee saued must be annoyed in their sickenes, like the Heracleonite heretiques, that it is lawfull for women to Baptise like the Marcionites: that children unbaptized are not vnder the conenant, & that grace is giuen with the outward signe, like the Arrians and Heracleonites: that children must bee annointed with oyle in Baptisme, like the heretiques Marcus and Marcosus, that Baptisme washeth away originall sinnes, and such actually as are committed before, like the Nouatians, and Messalian heretikes, that the Sacra-
ment

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crament of the Supper of the Lord, after the wordes of Consecration spoken, is the verie body and bloud of Christ, so the heretiques called Macrites said they made by coniuration, and for this cause the Pepusian heretiques baked the bloud of man with the bread ordayned for this supper that wine must bee mingled with water, as the Artotyrites said, they must offer Cheese with the bread in the Sacrament that good workes merit eternall life like the Pelagians, Catharites, and Mahumetistes, that a man since the fall of Adam hath free will and that God hath predestinated none, like the Pelagians, that it is lawfull for vs to sweare by creatures, as the virgin Marie, Saintes and Angels so doe the Manicheans and Mahumetistes: that some sinnes bee mortall and some veniall, so doth Mahomet affirme: with a thousande like most vaine, wicked, wretched, blasphemous and damnable assertions, which were most easie to be proued if there were any question of it. By this your Ho. may perceiue, that their Religion is but patched of many condemned heresies defended by vnwritten traditions, and maintained by violent and forcible dealing: like the Chameleon they haue often changed and poysoned the world, but the scriptures are as a bay leafe, to cure the contagion of such

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of such mortall confusion, and thus in some sort
I haue performed my promise, in deliuering
the vanity of the world which hath refused the
wisedome of the eternall word of God, The end
of this my speech is to shew the wonderfull and
incomparable treasure of the holy scriptures;
for as the Golde hath the brightest beames, be-
ing laide to the Copper: as the aduante is of
greatest force, when the loadestone is beside it,
and the purest colour hath the best hiew, when
the counterfet is compared with it; so the bles-
sing of God in his word, doth most magnificently
appeare, when wee behold before our eyes the
counterfaiete colours of superstitious conceiptes,
the crooked deuises and cursed opinions of the
condemnea Crue, which hath refused the waye
of life declared herein, and chused the path of
damnation for the hire of their superstition.
The scriptures are not onely a Castle to keepe vs
from heresie, but also a salue or remedie, if wee
haue beene poysoned by falshoode, The sting of
the Scorpion is cured by applying the Achates
stone, the grasse Alimos preserueth the fami-
shed person from death, The Baare hauing eaten
Mandragera saueeth his life by the litle Em-
met, and the poyson of the Chameleon is ex-
pelled by a Bay leafe: euen so the worde of God
sweth the heresies of Poperie, which are com-
pared

Dedicatorie

pared to the stinging of the Scorpions in the Scriptures, it is the fruit of the tree of life, and whosoever eateth and digesteth it shall neuer die, it is a preseruatiue against all poison, and the leaues thereof shall cure the nations. By this alone the Lord hath wrought the calling of his children, the confusion of his enemies, the comfort of his Saintes, and the replenishing of his kingdome. All the Kinges of the earth haue beene in armes against it: yet the ministers thereof, who neuer bore armes against them, by their onely preaching haue wonne a glorious felde. Ali Egypt could not resist Moses and Aaron, because they came on the Lordes message: no more shall all the world ouercome the preachers of peace, so long as they faithfully performe their heauenly Ambassage. Wordes haue wrought more then weapons; the spirite haue pearced more then the Speare; the wals of Paper and the ordinaunce of Fathers haue battered downe the stately kingdome of the whoore of Babilon, learning hath done better service then Launces, Gowes haue conquered moe then Gunnes, Bookes haue done more good then Bullets, and the prayers of the faithfull haue preuailed more then the Pikes of horsemen, the stone which the builders refused, is become the head.

The Epistle

head of the corner, this is the Lords doing, and it is meruelous in our eyes, the bloud of the dead Martyres hath giuen greater woundes in this quarrell, then the swordes of the liuing souldiours. But thus I haue too long troubled your Hon. with that which you knew before, and haue presumed on your fauour for the acceptation of these my slender labours vpon one parte of Scripture, the booke of Ruth; which as the holy Ghost hath vouchsafed to call by the name of a woman, to the praise of the whole sexe and cuerlasting commendation of her Religion, so am I emboldened to dedicate it to so Honourable a Lady, as your selfe, whome I know to be a Ruth by Religion, though a Noble woman by birth. For many witnesses can testifie this also if I should be silent, and the ordinarie exercises at Seuenoke, will sound your name, because your presence and dilligence at them hath stirred up many meaner persons, comforted some godly people thereabout, and much euery way countenaunced, and encouraged the preachers of the same. There are many causes which might compell mee, (though unwilling) to commit my labourres to the Presse, yet willingly to present them to the world under the name of your Honour. For I am assured of the accepta-
tion

Dedicatorie

tion of any small thing that shall bee offered in the name of Religion, much more of this which comprehendeth the recompence and rewarde of our profession. Your Honour knoweth that better it is to see the smoke of ones owne Countrie, then the fire of another, so I trust my slender studies which are but a smoke being compared with the burning coales of others knowledge, such as dayly you heare, shall bee the better accepted, because there I had my beeing, where your honour hath your dwellinge. Also I am hereunto moued, that I might haue any occasion to testifie my bounden duety, which I ow unto that Noble and worthy Gentleman Sir Henrie Leonard your Sonne, of whome I haue receiued especiall encouragements, in the course of my studies, and to whom I must remaine a debtour to the ende of my dayes, being nowaies able to recompence his woted kinnesse, but onelie by this, daylye to praye for the life and prosperitie, that hee may bee as the heyre of your Honour, so an ornament of the noble house of the Dacres. And the God of all peace blesse your owne person, with such blessinges as you daylye desire, that you may still liue to the comfort of the godly in this present life, to the enlarging of your
own

The Epistle

owne Honour, to the reioycing of your whole family, and to the endlesse saluation of your owne soule with Iesus Christ the Sauour of all them, which haue unfainedly embraced true religion. London this first of October.

1597.

Your Honours to command in the Lord.

Edward Topsell.





To all them that haue vnfa-
nedly embraced true
Religion.



Dearly beloued in Christe,
when I consider that com-
fortable Oracle of the Apo-
stle, when he saith that god-
linesse hath the promises of
this life and of the life to come, it com-
met h into my minde, that religion is none
of the meanest professions, that is labour-
ed for in the worlde: for the greatest re-
wardes are promised to the chiefeſt ex-
ploites, and the worthiest enterprises are
Crowned with glorious benefites. *Ioseph*
for his wisdom was made the gouer-
nour of Egypt, *Othniell* for his seruice re-
ceyued *Aisah* the daughter of *Caleb* for his
wife. *Iptah* for his victorie was made
iudge of Israel, and *Dauid* for his musicke
was made one of the Courtiers of *Saull*.
In

To the Reader.

In so much as it seemeth an ordinary practise that euerie knowledge is rewarded with some curtesie whereby wee are certified, that it is no meruaile to heare & to hope for so excellent blessings as are promised to the Religious. For they are the house of the Lorde, and as he dwelleth with all Maiestie in heauen, so he raigneth with all Authoritie in the righteous, they are a chosen generation born of God, a royall and holy priesthoode, a holy nation, a peculiar people, the free men of Christ, the inheritours of the earth, the iudges of the world, the coheyres of Christes kingdome, and the Citizens of heauen. If wee looke for their Nobilitie, they are the Sonnes of God, if for their instruction, they are taught of God, if for their tuition, the heauenly Angels are their seruantes, if for their degrees they are kings and priestes for the eternall God, if for their callinge they are Saintes: if for their life it is heauenly: if for their wealth it is the whole worlde, and finally their death is the birth day of all felicitie. For this cause *Dauid* desired rather to bee a doore-keeper in the house of God, then a dweller in the stately tentes of the wicked,

To the Reader

as if the meanest condition amonge the professors of Religion, were more excellent then the chiefeſt eſtates among the worldlings, their Croſſes excell the others Crownes, their barrenneſſe the others fruitfullneſſe, their humilitie the others honour, their ignorance the others knowledge, their ſimplicitie the others wiſedome, their weakenefſe the others ſtrength, and a little thing that the righteous hath, is better then the great poſſeſſions of the vngodly. When there is famine they are ſatiſſied, when there is warre they are deliuered, when there is plague they are without danger, if fire fall from heauen it ſhall not burne them, if the waters ariſe about the mountaines, they are not drowned, if the earth quake and rend aſunder, yet they are not ſwallowed vp, if the wilde beaſtes fall vpon them they are not deuoured, and if the Deuill himſelfe would oppreſſe them, yet he ſhall not ouercome them. Then how glorious is our calling? that liue vnder the wings of God, that feede with the flocke of Chriſt, to whome are reuealed the ſecrete Counſels of the Lord, ſpeaking vnto vs by his Miniſters, giuing vs the euidence of our ſaluation

To the Reader

saluation by his Testament, regenerating
ys by the immortall seede of his holye
word, sealing vs with the spirit of promise,
lifting vs vp from the dust of worldly mi-
serie, to the thrones of heauenly Maiestie.
Salomons seruantes were happie that stood
in his presence and hearde his wisedome.
Daniel was happie when the Lions could
not destroy him, his fellowes were hap-
pie when the fire coulde not consume
the m, the Israelites were happie when the
Egyptians were drowned, *Iob* was happy
when his wealth was restored, and the
Disciples were blessed when they hearde
Christ preach. How many blessings be-
long to the religious? Sathan that roaring
Lion cannot ouercome them, the fire
shall haue no power ouer them, their ene-
mies shall neuer hurt them, the riches of
the grace of God shall bee powred vpon
them, and the word of life is dayly prea-
ched vnto them. Consider therefore my
beloued, what is the hope of our profes-
sion whereunto wee are called, the digni-
tie of our condition wherein wee stande,
and the reward of our Religion prepared
for our soules. Call to mind the examples
of the Fathers, the promises of the Gos-
pel,

To the Reader

pell the oath of the Lord himselfe, the price of our redemption, and the place of our saluation: you shall finde nothing wanting in Religion, that might encrease your blessednes. Therefore how happye are the eares that heare the thinges which wee heare, the eyes that see the thinges which wee see, the handes that handle the thinges which wee touch, nay the soules that are assured of the fauour of God. If all the worlde woulde goe about to set downe the felicitie of the godly and the dignitie of the chosen, they coulden euer atchaue it: no, not that which they enioy in this life, for their thoughtes are heauenly, their heartes the throne of the holy Ghost, their handes feeles the Lord of glorie, their tongues talke of his praise, their feet stande in his temple, their wordes are acceptable before him, their prayers like sweet sauoures of incense, their worshippe like Euening sacrifices, their eyes beholde his glorie, their eares heare his wisedome, and their names are written in the kingdom of heauen. Would not any man become religious, that hee might bee rewarded with this excellent honour? To eate his meat with the Kinge of heauen, to

A

weare

To the Reader

weare the Crowne that neuer shall haue
ende, to haue the Angels his Attenders,
the Saintes his fellowes, the heauens his
dwelling place, the starres vnder his feet,
the euerlasting light to walke in, the pre-
sence of God to delight him, & the plea-
sures of paradise for the recompence of
his religion. For this cause I haue giuen
this title vnto these my slender labours
vpon this booke of Ruth, wherein (belo-
ued in Christ) you shall finde the matter
agree with the title, and the hope of all
the faithfull concerning the ende of their
profesion, so profitably decyphered, as
hath comforted manye troubled soules,
confirmed many wauering mindes, cou-
founded many obstinat Atheists, encour-
aged many godly persons, and therefore
I hope will offer the same fauour vnto you
in reading, as it hath vnto many other in
preaching. Herein the holy Ghost (I
meane in the booke of Ruth hath laide
open whatsoeuer can bee expected of
them that feare the Lord here are afflictions
to humble vs, death to preuent vs, &
examples to admonish vs: here is the zeale
of the godly, the vertue of an effectual
calling, the vizard of hypocrysie declared
vnto

To the Reader

vnto vs; here is the loue of the faithfull,
the obedience to parentes, and the bene-
uolence of Godly persons commended
vnto vs: here is the care of our parentes,
the giftes of the spirite, and the holines of
the Religious committed to the Church:
here is the office of Magistrates, the Pray-
ers of our brethren, and the calling of
the Gentiles expressed, in the marriage of
Ruth with *Boaz*, who was made a mother
of many kinges, but especially of the kinge
of glory, the sonne of God, the Sauour
of the world, & the gatherer together of
the heires of grace. My desire therefore is
this, that you trie it by perusing and rea-
ding this treatise: for it is but superfluous
labour for me, any farder to trouble you
with the Argument hereof, seeing the
whole matter lieth before your conside-
ration. I wil pray for your successe, & com-
mend the end of my trauailes, (which is
the comfort and instruction of the mem-
bers of Christ,) to the fountaine of mercy,
by whome the heauens water the earth,
and the earth multiplieth with increase,
and the encrease thereof preserueth the
world, that by the same power, your souls
may be edified, your faith may be strēgh-
ned

To the Reader

ned my labours may bee blessed, that his
name may be glorified, his worde may e-
uermore be taught among vs, that many
generations may embrace his Gospek, and
the course thereof finished, our Religion
by the mercie of the father, in the sonne
with the holy Ghost may bee rewarded
with eternall saluation, to whome let vs
euermore giue thanks because hee hath
vouchsafed vs the dignitie thereof, and
walke worthe of our calling, least our se-
cure liues, our Idle faith, our vaine
hope, our colde profession, and
our common conuersation
with the vngodly, bring
vpon vs euerlasting
damnation

*Your Louing brother who
desireth your prayers.*

Edward Topsell.



LO here what guerdon godlinesse doth get,
And how the croffe doth come before the
Lo widowes twaine before our eyes are set (crowne:
Not raisd' aloft, before they be cast downe.
And thou *O Ruth* renouncing native towne,
And *Baal-peor* God of *Mobab* land,
Art set at rest, and blest by Gods owne hand.

The loue of friends and Countrie overpeized
With loue of soueraigne Lord behold in sight.
The antique age and life of Patriarkes praised,
How liberall, frugall, chaste, pure, and vpright.
But now this mould of earth is turned quite.
Alas that nought in perfect state should sit,
The world is chang'd, and wee are chang'd in it.

Art thou a maid? Learne here of *Ruth* thy mate,
To chuse whome God inspires with grace diuine,
A widdow thou? To paines and labour late,
In each degree thy selfe with *Ruth* resigne,
Or art a wife? To righteous *Ruth* incline.

If wife, or maid, or widdow then thou bee:
Thy selfe in *Ruth*, thou as in Glasse shalt see.

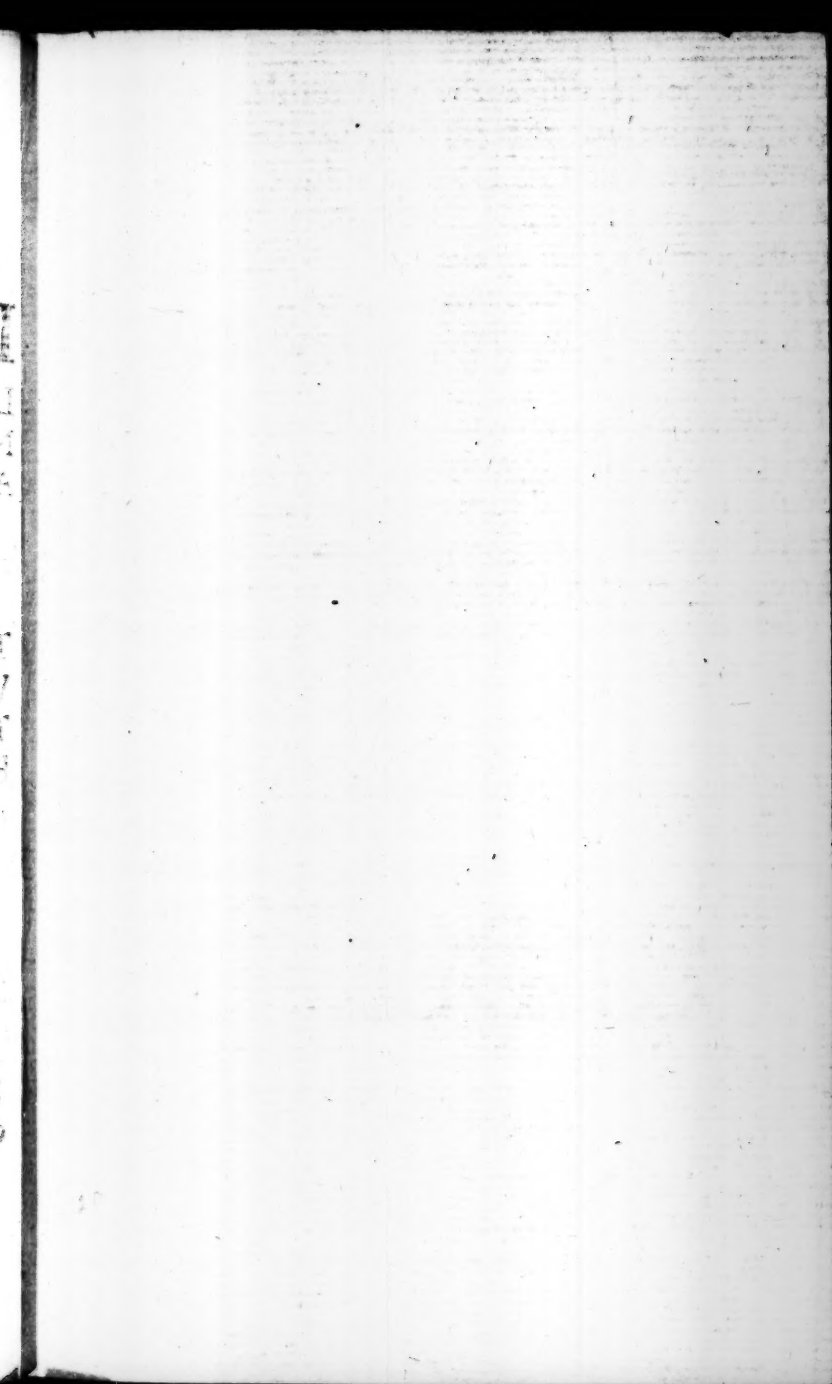
Go little booke, display thy golden title,
(And yet not little, though thou little bee:)
Little for price, and yet in price not little,
Thine was the paine, the gaine is ours I see:
(Although our gain thou deemst no paine to thee)
If then *O Reader* little paine thou take,
Thou greatest gaine with smallest pain shalt make.

The hungrie stomacke feedes with full desire,
Whereby they itall spiritcs soone renew:
So if thine heart shall burne with heauenly fire,
Hereby great fruit shall to thy faith accrew.

Trye erethou trust, and then giue sentence trew,
If reading once be pleasant to thy tast,
Next pleaseth more, yet sweetest comes at last.

William Atterfoll.





The Analysis or Resolution of the Book

*The booke of
Ruth containeth the lively
Viewe of the
Reward of
Religion in the
family of Eli-
melech, wherein
must be consi-
dered their*

[afflictions as

Famine which bringeth

insolterable want and
miserie to the
fearefull and pining de

Selling

*Sojourns and wandering in strange
Countries to*

(forake the people
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**to remain with
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Among Strangers in their pilgrimage.

Among their own friends at home the

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(To their owne country
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Graciously received of the

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with companie gained to
the Lord for the

increase of the Church by { who
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sanctify

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owne that be dead

e Booke of Ruth.

Witter decay and losse of worldly prosperitie.

Selling and forsaking their patrimonies.

ish.

the people of { Temple and place of sacrifice,
de with the { Lords Ministers and word.

sine with their { Many yeares together.

s infidels { To die and be buried among them.

tt.

age.

me the famine being ended.

sed of their friends { to the praise of God in his word.

{ to their own comforts in y^e Lord.

red by y^e Magistrates { to their liberty { 1 to be present
2 to haue iustice.
to their lands livings.

e { wholesome
doctrine.

{ sanctified and holy conuersations.

their { to stirre vp their names { in their houses.
dead { on their inheri-
tance.

{ to multiply their { worldly honour.
{ Fathers family for { the Reward of their
Religion.

The Analysis of

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THE REWARD OF RELIGION.

Ruth. Cap. I. vers. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

1. *I*N the time that the Iudges ruled, there was a famine in the land: and a certaine man of Bethleem Iudah went for to sojourne in the countrie of Moab, he and his wife, and his two sonnes.
2. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wyfe Naomi, and the names of his two sonnes Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of the land of Iudah, and when they were come into the land of Moab, they continued there.
3. Then Elimelech the husband of Naomi died there, and she remained with hir two sonnes.
4. Which tooke them wiues of the Moabites, the name of the one was Horpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten yeres.
5. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both twaine, so the woman was left destitute of her two sonnes, and of her husband.
6. Then she arose with her daughters in law, and returned from the countrie of Moab: for she had heard saie in the countrie of Moab, that the Lord had visited his people, and giuen them bread.



Although the author of this booke of *Ruth* hath not expressed his name, yet there is no doubt but it proceedeth from the spirit of God, as well as the bookes of the Iudges, Kings, & Chronicles, which haue not the names of their authors described: but if it may be lawfull to iudge or giue any sentence thereof, it was either *Samuel*, or some other godly Prophet vnder the raigne of *Saul*, which is proued by the genealogies in the last chapter, where *Dauid* is by name mentioned, testifying vnto vs, that it was then written,

B.

when

when he was chosen from his bretheren and anointed King ouer Israell, and yet before his raigne, or els there had beene added vnto it, the title of a King, for the aduauancing of the name of Ruth, who was his Grandmother, vpon whome this history following dependeth, for the summe and scope hereof is to shewe the pedigree or ancestry, the naturall progenitours of Christ from Iudah the fourth sonne of Iacob, vntill the time that he began to challenge the princely seate, the royall scepter, and the right of gouernment ouer the people of Israell, which was at that time, when Dauid was chosen from his fathers house, & anoynted king by Samuel. Againe, in this history, there is deliuered vnto vs the hope which the fathers had concerning the calling of the Gentiles, for this mariage of Ruth into the kindred of Christ, who was a Gentile, & by nature none of the people of God, did plainely foretell that the Gentiles should be called in Christ: for as hee tooke part of his humane nature of them, so he shewed vs that hee would giue the same for them, that there might be no difference in his body, between Iewes & Gentiles, but that the power of his death, the graces of the spirit, and the knowledge of redemption might redounde to all. Now the occasion of this history is deliuered vnto vs in this first Chapter, which is, the soiourning of a certaine Iew in the land of Moab, (by reason there was a famine in the land of Iudah,) with his familye, and the returne of them that liued, which were onely Naomi his wife, and one other, Ruth the Moabitesse the widdowe of his eldest sonne. This wandering or soiourning is described with all the circumstances thereof, in these first sixe verses lately read: and generally containe in them these two parts, the first, is their trauaile to the land of Moab, the second, those things that happened vnto them, after they came thither. The first part is expressed in these two first verses, first, by the occasion, which is declared by the time and by the thing that moued them thereunto, in these wordes, *In the time that the Iudges ruled, there was a famine, &c.* Secondly, by the persons that trauayled, who are described by the place frō whence they were, namely of Bethlechem

The Reward of Religion.

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Ichem Iudah, these were the parents and the children which are named in the 2. ver. The seconde parte of these woordes, is in the foure other vetſes following, and it concerneth eyther the parents or the children: the parents, that one of them euen Elimelech, the father of the familye dyed there shortly after their ariual: the chyl- dren, first that they married, ver. 4: secondly, that they like- wise dyed ver. 5: Then remained onely Naomi, with her two daughters in lawe, and the time of hir abode in Moab, is set downe to be ten yeares ver. 4: secondly, the occasion of her departure, because shee heard say, that God had visited his people, and giuen them bread, ver. 6. of these partes let vs speake in order, as the spirite shall giue utterance, and the time permit. *In the daies that the Iudges ruled.* In these wordes the holy Ghoste after Gen. 1.1 his accustomed manner, for the more certaintie of the Esay. 1.1 historic, beginneth at the time as Moses beginneth his Iere. 1.2. booke of Genesis from the first creation of the worlde, Eph. 1.1. so the prophets in the beginning of their bookes, sette downe vnder what King or kings they prophesied. so al- Math. 2.1 so in the newe Testament wee may see how three of the Mar. 1.3.4 Euangelists beginnie their Gospels from the preaching of Luke. 1.5. Iohn Baptist, and the raigne of King Herod. The which order they vndoubtedly learned of the olde writers, the same spirite guiding them to one and the same trueth, vseth but one and the same manner of speaking. For the almightie desiring to meete with the wrangling obiections of humane inuentions, so tempereth the texte of euery scripture, as if question were made who did such a thing. Hee nameth the persons where it was done. Hee quoteth the place, and when was it done. Hee mentioneth the time. The cause heereof is, that hee might stay the waues of our fickle mindes, vpon the pillar of truth, his everlasting worde. But in this place hee chieflie mentioneth the time of the Iudges, to shew vnto vs, that when religion was corrupted, the worship of God decayed, and idolatricke aduanced: when the Lorde was forgotten of his owne people, when his lawes were no more obser- Iudg. 2.18 & 21.25. ued, but euery man did that which seemed good in hys owne eyes, yea, when there were almost as many Gods

Pro. 20. 30.

1. Ki. 14. 16

& 16. 2. 13.

4.

1. King. 18.

35. 37.

among them as they were men, then euen then did the Lord send this plague of famine among them. For, Salomon saith, the blewnes of the wounde serueth to purge the cuell, and the stripes within the bottome of the belly: as if he had sayd, as the ripenes of a wounde calleth for a corasue, so the fulnes of sinne cryeth for vengeance: by this therfore we note, that the corruption of religion, and neglect of the worship of God is the cause of all his iudgments that are exercised in the world. For the idolatry of Ieroboam and his sinnes, whereby hee induced Israell to sinne, did the Lord threaten by Achia the prophet, to scatter the people, so we may reade of Bascha king of Israell, and so Salomon prayed at the dedication of the temple: when heauen shall be shut and thou giue no rayne bicause they haue sinned against thee &c. where he comprehendeth the chiefe & capitall worldly punishments of sinne, as dearth and famine, sword & pestilence, blindnes & ignorance, which are also the rewards of sin, & the vnseparable companions of all vnrighteousnes. And what saith the Lord by the Prophet? Cast frō you all your sins wherewithall you haue transgressed, & make you a new hart, for why shuld you die, oh you house of Israel: as if he had sayde, either repent, or else be damned, for it is a fearefull thing to fall into the handes of the liuing God. And may not wee thinke that all these thunderings out of God his iudgments among vs, will stir vp some raine of punishments vpon vs? Are we not already put into the winepresse, to be brused vnder the hand of fearefull destruction? How many plagues haue come vpon vs within these fewe yeeres? Where is become the remembrance of the late enemies pretended iuuation? The rumour whereof amazed the harts of our couragious champions, which spend all their daies in pleasure: Oh then they cryed, if they might be deliuered, they would alot some time of their dayes to the seruice of the Lord. Where is the remembrance of the late plague, which was scattered almost in euerie place of the land? Oh then wee cryed vnto the Lord in our distresse, and he deliuered vs out of all our miseries. Oh that men would therefore confesse the Lord,

The Reward of Religion.

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Lord, and declare the wonders he doth for the children of men. But what are we now amended? Is the vngodly person turned from his vngodlinesse, and not rather strengthened in his iniquitie? They which were ignorant are ignorant still, and many like *Demas*, who seemed religious, haue imbraced this present world. As for the prophane both of poore and rich, they haue made a league with death, & a couenant with the graue, though a sword come thorough the land, yet (say they) it shall not come at them. And therefore who can without waterye eyes and bleeding heart, tell this present plague of dearth and famine which we now most iustly endure, and yet who knoweth how long it shall continue. Now, (as the prophet saith) we are gathered together and howle vpon our beds for corne and for newe wine; that is, for the belly and for the throate, but there is a greater leannes in the soule. Now we bite the stone which the Lord hath cast at vs, but we looke not at the hand, which did send it, and who thinketh it to be a punishment of sinne that now raigneth among vs? The papists say it is for our heresies, the popish atheists say, that the world was best when the old religion was, for then all things were cheape, like the idolatrous Iewes, which said vnto Ieremy, that it was wel with them when they burnt incense and made cakes to the host of heauen. The russians say to the preachers, as Achab said to Eliah, Are not you the troublers of Israel, when it is themselves and their fathers houses, while they haue left the commaundement of God and followed their pleasures, yea, almost the whole Countrey is so vainely addicted, that among those multitudes of preachers that are abroad, there is not one that faithfully followeth his vocation, but they are molested by the basest, and contemned by the best. So that we may saye as our Sauour sayth, we haue piped vnto you & you haue not daunced, we haue mourned, and you haue not sorrowed, yet wisdom is iustified of her children, who are not ashamed to pleade her cause in the gates of the cities, before the face of her enemies: the Lord increase the number of them.

Hof. 7. 14.

13.

Iere. 44. 19.

I. King. 18.

17.

II.

17.

Psal. 127. 1.

Wee haue long retained the name of Christians, that

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Mat. 23. 3

Mat. 21. 30.

Ioh. 15. 2

Ioh. 10. 14.

Ge. 31. 34.

is, the annointed of the Lord, and yet our Lamps are empty, and we deferre our daies in slumber, thinking our selues as good christians as the best, till we be vtterly excluded from the bridechamber. we haue promised the Lorde oftentimes to worke in his vineyarde, but yet who hath entred? we are the vineyarde of the Lorde, and he hath dressed vs: what fruite haue we borne vnto him? wee are the sheepe of Christ and yet wee knowe not his voice: & as Rahel couered her fathers idolls with sitting on them, and with a lye, so we that are the greatest sinners, couer our iniquities, with hypocrysie and dissembling. Such pollution of sabboathes as neuer was, yea, euen in this time of dearth and famine, drinking and drunkenness, dauncing and riot, feasting and surfetting chambering and wantonnes, swearing and forswearing, accompting gaine to bee godlines, and godlines to be the burthen of the world, with a thousand greater and more grievous calamities, as if the bird could sing in the snare, or as the fatted ox: that runneth wilfully to the slaughter. Then beloued let vs looke about vs: euen now is the axe of God his iudgments laid to the root of euerie mans heart, and he is accursed that feareth it not: euen now the Lord is knocking at the doore of our hearts, and if euer, let vs open vnto him, that the King of glory may come in. Euen these are the daies wherein iniquitie hath gotten the vpper hand, and the loue of many is waxen colde. Therefore as the Angell warned the godly, so must wee still come out from among them: my people, bee not partakers of their sinnes, least you beare a parte of theyr plagues. This is the haruest of the Lord, oh let vs that be the Lords seruants gather out the wheat, least it bee burned with the tares. There is a holie conuocation to the Lord, & the Lords ministers sound out the trümper, if we appeare not, the earth will open her mouth, and reuenge our rebellion & swallow vs vp a liue, Let vs at the length say with the Iewes, Come let vs turne vnto the Lorde, for he hath spoiled vs and he shall heale vs, he hath smitten vs and he shall binde vs vp: after two daies he shall giue vs life, and the third day he shall raise vs vp and wee shall liue before him: if with knowledge wee follow him, to know

Pro. 7. 22.

Mat. 3. 10.

Reu. 18. 4.

Num. 16.

12. 32.

Hos. 6. 1. 2.

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know the Lord his rising is like the morning, and he shall come vpon vs like raine in a drought, both the first and the latter raine vpon the earth. Let not our righteousness, be as the dew before the sunne rising, but put on the Lord Iesus Christ, and let none call vpon him, but such as depart from iniquity.

Secondly, by this we gather that the Lord is as true in his iudgements, as in his mercyes : for he threatened by Moses, saying: if you forsake me & sal to worship strange Gods (as now they did) then your heauen shall be as brasse, and your earth as iron, and your raine like dust, till they were consumed from the face of the earth. Of all these miseries you may see in the booke of Iudges, Samuel, and Kings, to which I referre you at your leysure, as of Saul, Dauid, Ieroboam, Achab, Zidkia, and others, as in this present place : where they are oppressed ten yeares together, so that heauen and earth may passe, but the word of the Lord abideth for euer.

Deut. 28.
23, 24.

For this cause the prophets adde to their preaching of iudgements : (*Thus sayth the Lord*) as if they had sayd, it shall neuer be altered. And if the lawes of heathen men, such as the Medes and Persians, might not alter, much lesse the word of the Lord which is like siluer purified seuen times, should haue any drosse or changeable substance in it. We see the law of nature stand inuio-
lable for euer, and shall not the law of him which made nature, be also immutable? when the fire ceaseth to be hote, and the water to be colde, then shall be exception taken against God his iudgements, and not before. The vse of this doctrine is to cast downe the presumption of notorious sinners, who, to auoyd the terrors of God his iudgements, deceiue their owne soules with this, that God is mercifull. So that in their most singular sinnes, they will flye to the mercyes of God, as if they were the verie bonde of all iniquitie, yea, and these kinde of people perswade themselves to bee as good Christians as any in the world, because they can say the Lord is mercifull.

Dan. 6. 9.
Psal. 12. 6.

But heare me a little in one word I pray you, I am per-

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swaded that I speake to many of these people this day. What hurt hath the Lord done vnto you, that you rob him of his iustice? Shall the Prophet be found a liar that sayth, The Lord is iust in all his waies, and holy in all his workes? Or shall the Apostle speake vnto truth, that sayth: It is a iust thing with God to render affliction to them that afflict you, & release to you that are afflicted? Why shall we then spoile God of his iudgements, vnlesse we will depriue our selues of our owne saluation. But you will say, this serueth for the wicked, as Atheists, Turkes, Pagans, Infidels, and such like, which shall haue no part with Christ. I answer, what greater wickednes can there be, than to depriue God of his iustice? Would a mortall man indure to be accounted without honestie, and shall the euerlasting king abide to be spoiled of his righteousness? Nay, the iustice of God pertaineth to such as you would be, holy persons, as well as to any. For what saith the Prophet, When the iust man turneth from his righteousness to do iniquitie, he shall die in it. And Peter sayth, that iudgement must begin at the house of God. And a father once saide, God of his most deere iustice hath decreed the summe of all discipline, both in exacting and in defending: as if he had sayd, there is no correction of the Lord, but it proceedeth from his iustice, now the children of God are corrected, for he scourgeth euery child whom he receiueth. And therefore the iudgements of God must be thundered out as well for the confirming of the faithfull, as the confusion of Infidels. But others there are that are so farre past feeling of either mercies or iudgements, that as soone the deafe adder will heare the voice of the charmer, as they any impression of terrour for sinne. Hence commeth this custome of sinning, which euery sabboth commit their wonted iniquitie, euery houre vomit out their poison of blasphemies, and euery day violate the lawes of charitie, who through their dayly staring on the sonne of righteousness, are now become starke blinde, and with the continuall noise of God his waters, are made so deafe, that they can heare no goodnesse. Vnto both these sorts of

sa. 145. 17

. Thel. 1. 6

Ezc. 18. 26.

1. Pet. 4. 17

Heb. 12. 6.

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of people, hearken what the Lord sayth in his Gospell, Mat. 23. 48.
 But if that euill seruant shall saie in his heart, the Lord
 deferreth his comming, and shall begin to smite his fel-
 low seruants, and to eate and drinke with the drunken,
 the Lord of that seruant shall come in a day that hee
 looketh not for, and in an houre that he knoweth not,
 and shall separate him, and giue him his part with vn-
 beleeuers, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 This shall be the end of secure christians, and contemp-
 tuous sinners, carnall Atheists, & despisers of wholsome
 doctrine; which haue no part but in this present life, with
 endlesse and fearefull damnation in the world to come,
 thus much of the first part, the circumstance of time,
 Now let vs go to the thing which is the second part, of
 the occasion. *There was a famine in the land.* This was
 the chiefe cause which moued these persons to travell,
 the auoiding of the pinching penurie of fearefull death,
 by lingering till the end of this pining famine.

Of all the punishments of sinne which happen in this
 life, there is none more vehement than famine. There-
 fore the Lord by the Propheet, threatneth to send his ar-
 rowes of famine to breake the staffe of bread. Where he Eze. 5. 16,
 alludeth to a maine battell, signifying vnto vs, first as the
 arrow is the fittest instrument to breake the ranke, so a
 famine is the sharpest weapon to dismay the couragious
 stomackes of rebellious sinners. For as the arrow is al-
 way in sight, so a famine euer in sense: the arrow hur-
 teth, but not with a speedie death, a famine spoileth, yet
 with tedious miserie: the arrowe entered, doth procure
 more paine and greater wound at the pulling forth,
 than the falling in: euen so abundance of meate sooner
 dispatcheth a famished person than lingering hunger.
 Therefore Dauid put to his choice of three plagues, fa-
 mine, flying, and pestilence, chose the last as the most so-
 dainest, and therefore accompanied with lesse grieve, for
 that disease by the rule of phisicke is most dangerous,
 which is the longest in growing. Now we may reade of
 many famines in the Scripture, one and the first we read
 of, was in the dayes of Abraham, another in the daies of I. Sam. 24,
 Izhak his sonne. Seuen yeeres famine was in Egypt, 14. 15.
 where Gen. 12. 10.
Gen. 26. 12

Gen. 41. 30. where Ioseph by the hand of God, succored the Church in his fathers familie. And to omit that in Dauids time, 1. Sam. 21. and that in Ahabs time, with those in the dayes of Iehoram and Zidkia, with many others. We reade in the new Testament of a vniuersall famine, in the dayes of Claudius Cæsar, prophesied by Agabus, when the Church did most notably releue one another. Vnto the which we may adde that at the destruction of Ierusalem, about fortie yeeres after Christ. All which are most worthie spectacles of humane miserie, and worthy examples of God his iudgements, to terrifie all them which saye in their prosperitie, they shall neuer be moued. There wee may reade of the pittifull death of many thousands which starued in the streetes, in the face of theyr dearest friends, and yet were not able to releue them. There wee may see howe men were driuen to eate dogges, cats, rats, mice, and horse flesh : but that which is most miserable, the mothers to succour theyr stomackes and bodies, with the slaughter and eating of their owne children. What heart of adamant would not weepe, yea, rather bleede at the sight heereof? And yet beholde a greater famine than all these. Is it possible? yea verily, a famine of the word of God, when men shall goe from one sea to another, and from the North to the East, running to seeke the word of God, & shall not find it? In that day shall fall both the fayre virgins & the young men, which sweare by the idols of Schomron, & saie, As thy God liueth, O Dan, and as the God of the waie of Beershebah liueth, they shall fall, neither shall they euer rise vp againe. Is not this greater than the famine of bread? There was neuer famine so great, but if liberty were giuen, the famine was eased : but in this they shall haue libertie to run too and fro, and shall not be releued. There was neuer any famine where-with men were so hunger-starued, but some recovered, but in this, sayeth the Lorde, They that fall shall neuer rise againe. Oh that the open contemners of God his word, would drinke but one drop for a taste of these fearefull iudgements, I am perswaded that the heate of greedie sinne would be so cooled in them, that

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that they shoulde recouer the health of theyr soules, which will neuer bee, till of open prophaners they become publike professours. But of all these famines there is but one cause, which is the abuse of the creatures of God, for so the equity of Iustice requireth, that in the same thing wherein they sinned, they shoulde bee punished. Like as the theefe was bounde for that which hee stole, to restore foure folde. Fulnesse of bread was one of the sinnes of Sodome, and they vnderstoode not from whome they had it, because they were vnmercifull to the poore, and therefore abused it by vnthankfulness.

And this is a worthy doctrine to bee vrged in our daies, wherein our abuse is greater then our want, and yet our want is such as hath not beene heard of these many yeeres. The couetous seller keepeth in his corne, and draweth vppon himselfe the curse of the poore, saying it is scantie, it is scantie, when his garners are full. Is not this to tell that the Lorde his hande is shortned, when indeede it is lengthened? Is this to say, thou openest thy hande and fillest with thy blessing euerye liuing thing? Nay, you plainly accuse the Lord of illiberalitie.

Oh detestable crueltie, who for to sat vp theyr owne posterities, will murder the bodies of manye thousandes of pouertie, yea, this is more cruell than murder in the sight of God. Why deale you not playnelye, and say, the Lorde hath giuen aboundaunce, yet your price must bee raysed, so you shoulde speake truelye, and excuse the liberalyty of the Lorde in excusing your owne couetous desires. But oh wretchednesse, you will not lay the faulte vppon the guiltie, you iustifie the couetous, whome the Lorde abhorreth, and condemne the innocent liberalytie of him, who giueth to all freely, and casteth none in the teeth. Another sorte there are more viler than these, who of this greate want, which if the Lorde suffer to endure, vvyll turne to extreame famine, yet they will spend more vpon one to make him dronke, than vpon one dozen of poore folkes. These are the tiplers, ale sellers, and dronkards, the
very

very caterpillers of our countrey, who like the horse-leache are euer sucking, and neuer satisfied, and these onely consume much that other should not be contented with it. Of these both cities and countreyes are replenished, and the magistrates suffer them with little or no punishment at all: but if the poore preachers rebuke the folly, their safety is indangered by this rauenous brood, who are not ashamed to giue rayling, yea & threatening speeches. And magistrates seruants are in greatest fault, who are not onely partakers of this vnseasonable drinking, but also deale priuately with theyr maisters, that those which are complained, might escape unpunished. Thus are the poore vnrelieued, the countrie vnprovidid, the people vnanswered, the wicked unpunished, the common wealth vnreformed, the godly vncomforted, and the iudgements of God haled downe vpon vs, that we might be cuerlastingly confounded.

There went a certaine man. Now are we come to the persons that traueled, which is the second part of this verse, which we shewed you ended in the second verse: they are first generally described in this verse, and after specially by name in the next verses: They are of two sorts, first the parents, Elimelech & Naomi, secodly, the children, *Mahlon* and *Chilion*, who are all described by the place from whence they went, Bethlehem Iudah: it is so called because there was another Bethlehem, in the tribe of Zebulun: and this is that Bethlehem which in Genesis is called Ephratha, & therefore these persons are in these two verses called Ephrathites, of the place, where afterward Christ was borne. Then it is apparaunt by the booke of Iosuah, that the tribe of Iudah had the fruitfullest possession in all the land of Canaan, they were the greatest in number, the wyfdest in pollicy, the richest by inheritance: yet we see when the scourge of God came, the famine inuaded their countrie, and crope into the wals of Bethlehem, and made the wealthiest among them to flie: yet this Elimelech, which was as appeareth by his consanguinity of the princes of the whole tribe, such is the vehemency of the Lords arrowes, when he shooteth them abroad, that if king Achab were in his chariot, in the midst

of. 19. 15.
Gen. 35. 19,
Math. 2. 1,
Chap. 15.

King. 22.

34.

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dest of his host, yet one of them shall giue him a mortall wound. The vse of this doctrine is, to teach vs that if the Lord suffer his plague to continue, he will strike downe the chosen men in Israel, the chosen men in England, yea the noblest among vs, who thinke themselves in greatest securitie, can he easily bring to greatest misery. Therefore you whose heads the Lorde hath aduanced ouer your brethren, looke to your calling, for the voice of the Lord shaketh as well the ceders of Libanus, as the little shrubs in the wilderness of Cades: it is as easie with him to bind the nobles in chaines, and the princes in linkes of yron, as to raise vp the poore from the dunghill to the throne. Did not his darknesse couer as well the court of Pharao as the countrie of Egypt? Was not the first borne of the king destroyed, as well as of the poore peasants of the dwellings of Ham? Yea, when the Israelites were carried captiue to Babylon, their King and his children slaine before his face, his owne eyes put out, and after lead in a chaine, neither was he spared for his throne, nor you for your dignitie and wealth.

Psal. 29. 6.

6. 8.

Psal. 149. 8

Psal. 113. 7

Exod. 10.

22.

Exod. 11.

29.

2. King. 25

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Oh that you would therefore bee warned of your slipperie estate, that you might auoide the heauy wrath of God, when without respect of persons he shall iudge both quicke and dead. Let not the lots of your inheritance deceiue you, though their soile be as fruitfull as this of Iudah, and your possessions neuer so great: he that in one night destroyed all the fruites of Egypt, can also in one houre blast your corne with deawes, & consume your possession with drought, for a fruitfull land maketh he barren, for the wickednes of them that dwell therein.

Secondly, we note out of these words, when *he tooke his wife and children with him*, an example of a religious father, and a louing husband: he might (if he had consulted with flesh and bloud) done like our husbands in these dayes, which had rather in their wandering, stiffe about for themselves, and leaue wife and children in a sea of troubles, to sinke or swimme to some doubtfull releefe. But the godly in old time knew that their wiues and children were as themselves, and as they were careful to cherish their owne bodyes, so they were mindfull

to

to nourish their owne families. This the Lord at the first mariage that euer was, commaunded that for a mans wife he should forsake father and mother and they two shall bee one flesh: as if hee had said, parents must not hinder fellowship of wedlocke, much lesse pouertie or temporall wants: as the barke is ioyned to the tree, & the fleshe to the bone, if one be without the other they both perish, so must husband and wife liue and loue together, vnlesse they will be the slaughter-slaues of their owne destruction. We read of this practise in the scripture, when Abraham by reason of a famine went downe into Egypt, hee tooke Sara his wife with him: when Isaac by reason of a famine wēt to Abimelech the king of Gerar, he took Rebecca his wife with him. How doe we read of Iacob, how twise he sent into Egypt for al his family, & the third time he went down with all his household, his sonne Ioseph fed him fye yeres of famine: yea the Apostle saith, that he is worse then an infidel that prouideth not for his own familie, and Christ going from his disciples asked them if they had wanted any thing, and they answered, nothing. Against this point of doctrine there are manye that offend: some that are married by their couetous parents, who respecte nothing but wealth, are so matched, as if a vine were planted in the flowing of the sea, which prospereth best whē the water is lowest, euen so these are in sweetest fellowship when one is a thousand miles frō the other. Others there are which in their marryages, please nothing but their eies, which as old persons cannot see without spectacles, so they cannot finde wiues without the spectacles of bewtie, & these loue as long as bewty endureth, which is till they be sicke, for sickenes is the cutthroate of beauty. Some take wiues and husbands, as fools find pearles, for as they cannot discern them from pebles: so these are ignorant of all kind of dutie towards one another. From hence proceedeth all the adulteryes which are dayly committed, here ariseth the fountayne of strife, contention, debate, ielousie, & also the vnhappy blows which many giue to their wiues: hence it commeth, that so many Gentlemen and others are seldome at home but cyther beyond the sea in warres or in trauaile, which

Gen. 2. 24

Gen. 12. 18.

Gen. 26. 1.

Gen. cap.

2. 43. 44.

1. Tim. 5. 8

Gen. 6. 1.

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In their vnmarried estate wanted nothing but wiues, but now being married want all things but wiues. Hence it commeth, that they termed them by the odious titles of crosses, plagues, troubles, and also as I haue heard some say, the causes of their vndoing, whereas they may as well accuse the eye of his blindnes, as their wiues of their own wilfull miserie: and to conclude, there is not one breach of loue or kindnes betweene them, but it springeth from these corruptions, which then were sowed, when they intended their mariage. But oh beloued, let not the godly be drawn away with the crooked conuersation of these contentious persons, but let thē be armed with the forenamed examples of godly vnitie, that as their troubled daies were eased in the ioy of their owne loue, so let our miseries be releued which you suffer in wedlock, with your comfortable agreement in christian societie, for so saith Salomon, Let thy fountain be blessed, and reioyce **Pro. 5.18.** with the wife of thy youth: and thus much of this second doctrine. Thirdly, by this we may note that the godly are oppressed when the wicked haue abundance: heere we see the Israelites which were the Church of God had a famine, but the Moabits, to whom this man descended being a cursed generation, incestuous Gentiles, had plentie & abundance, for els Elimelech would not haue gone **Psal. 37.35.** thither to be reliued. **Psal. 17.14.** This may seeme a strāge thing that the godly shuld be oppressed with famine, when worldlings & heathens shall wallow in their wealth: Of these Daud speaketh, I haue seene the wicked strong, & spreading himselfe like a bay tree. And in another place, They **Psal. 73.4.** are inclosed in their owne fat: And againe he saith, They haue their portion in this life, whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure, their children haue inough, and leaue the rest of their substance to their children. And in another place, there are no bands in their death, but they are lusty & strōg, they are not in trouble like other men: and a litle after, these are the wicked, yet prosper they al- **Vcr. 12.** ways & increase in riches. The very like you may heare in **Iob. 21.7.** Iob, & in the prophet Ieremy. But of ſ righteous he saith **Iere. 12.1.** & often crieth out of their afflictions, their sorrowes & nakednes, their hūger & misery, all the day long are they appointed

- appointed as sheepe to the slaughter, yea, our Sauour
- Mat. 25. 42.** Christ pronounceth himselfe in his members, poore,
- 43.** hungry, naked, harborles, thirsty, & imprisoned, the foxes
- Mat. 8. 20.** haue holes and the birds of the aire haue nests, but the
- Heb. 11. 37** sonne of man hath not where to rest his head. And the
- authour of the epistle to the Hebrues, sayth of the godly,
- Some are stoned, some cut asunder, some slaine with the sword, some wandering abroad in goats skins and sheepe skins, destitute, oppressed, euill entreated, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts, in the mountaines, in dennes and caues of the earth. Iudge now I beseech you, betweene the outward estate of the godly & the wicked, are they not contrarie? That which of the world is condemned, is of the Lord commended; yet I beseech you my brethren, be not terrified from godlynes, but rather strengthened in your profession. Then will you say, tell vs the cause of all this inequality. Our sauour answereth it very wel, You are not (sayth he) of the world, if you were of the world, the world would loue his owne: and Dauid saith, that their portion is onely in this life, but Christ sayth, our reward shall
- Ioh. 15. 19.** be great in heauen: and againe, you shall weepe and lament, but the worlde shall reioyse, but your sorrowe shalbe turned to ioy, like a woman that reioyseth at the byrth of her sonne, so as a woman in trauaile hath no ease till a sonne is come into the world, neither must we looke for any rest till our soules are deliuered out of the wombe of the body into the kingdome of heauen. Our
- Ioh. 16. 20.** Sauour compareth vs to the fruitfull vine, which doth not onely abide frost, snow, storme and heate, but also at the gathering time is broken of that the grapes might be reached. The gold must be tried in the furnace, the siluer fined in the fire, the wheate purged in the floore, and before it be meate for man, is also ground in the mill, so must we be proued in affliction, fined in persecution, and crushed to pieces, vnder the burthen of our owne miseries, that we may be made prepared bread for the Lord his owne spending.
- Ioh. 15. 12.**

Why then doth the Lord make such large promises to his Church of plenty, seeing it endureth continuall po-
uertye

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17

uertie? I answere, the Church of God must be considered after two sortes, the first as it is cleansed in the blood of Christ, and washed pure from all outward and notorious offences, vnto which estate pertainē all those outward promises of liberalitie in the scripture; The second is the declined estate or corrupted condition of euery one in the church, euen vnto the worldes ende. vnto this pertainē all the punishments, persecutions and tribulations, which the godly endure: which the Lord sendeth vpon them, that hee might by little and little scourge vs from our transgressions, and weary vs with the miseries of this life, that we might the more earnestly desire the life to come: for the Lord doth here scourge vs that we should not be condemned with the world. Examples of these are most plentiful in the old testament of the Church of the Iews, & for as much as this perfectiō of the church being once lost, is like broken glasse, which can neuer be soldered againe, so the Church shall neuer attaine those promises in this life, but they are all referred to the life to come, where shal be no hunger, thirst, nakednes, pouerty, trauaile, famine, or sorrow, but all teares beeing wiped from the eyes of the faithfull, they shall then rest from their laboures, and receiue many thousand times, for euerie affliction which they heere endured, eternall felicity in the presence of Christ, when all worldings shall bee burned with vnquenchable fire.

Fourthly, in that they went down to the wicked Moabits & there rariēd, wee note that it is lawfull for the godly in the time of necessitie, to craue help or reliefe of the verie enemies of God, so they bee not polluted with theyr superstitions. For the prooffe hereof wee haue the former examples of Abraham in Egypt, of Isahac in Gerar, of Moses in Midian, when he fled from Pharaο, of the spies of Israel which lodged in the house of Rahab. So did the Lord commaunde Ioseph in a dreame, to take Marie and Christ, and to goe into Egypt, to saue Christ from Herod. So did Christ aske water of the woman of Samaria when he was weary, with infinite other testimonies which the godly may finde in the scripture. But the vse of this point is, that although the Lord hath permitted this

Gen. 12.7
& 26.1

Exo. 2. 22.

Ios. 2. 1.

Math. 2. 13

Iohn. 4. 7

appointed as sheepe to the slaughter, yea, our Sauour
Mat. 23. 42. Christ pronounceth himselfe in his members, poore,
43. hungry, naked, harborles, thirsty, & imprisoned, the foxes
Mat. 3. 20. haue holes and the birds of the aire haue nests, but the
Heb. 11. 37 sonne of man hath not where to rest his head. And the
 authour of the epistle to the Hebrues, sayth of the godly,
 Some are stoned, some cut asunder, some slaine with
 the sword, some wandering abroad in goats skins and
 sheepe skins, destitute, oppressed, euill entreated, of
 whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts;
 in the mountaines, in denes and caues of the earth.
 Iudge now I beseech you, betweene the outward estate
 of the godly & the wicked, are they not contrarie? That
 which of the world is condemned, is of the Lord com-
 mended; yet I beseech you my brethren, be not terrified
 from godlynnes, but rather strengthened in your professi-
 on. Then will you say, tell vs the cause of all this inequa-
 lity. Our sauour answereth it very wel, You are not (sayth
 he) of the world, if you were of the world, the world
 would loue his owne: and Dauid saith, that their porti-
 on is onely in this life, but Christ sayth, our reward shall
Ioh. 15. 19. be great in heauen: and againe, you shall weepe and la-
 ment, but the worlde shall reioyse, but your sorrowe
 shalbe turned to ioy, like a woman that reioyseth at the
 byrth of her sonne, so as a woman in trauaile hath no
 ease till a sonne is come into the world, neither must we
 looke for any rest till our soules are deliuered out of the
 wombe of the body into the kingdome of heauen. Our
Ioh. 16. 20. Sauour compareth vs to the fruitfull vine, which doth
 not onely abide frost, snow, storme and heate, but also
 at the gathering time is broken of that the grapes might
 be reached. The gold must be tried in the furnace, the
 siluer fined in the fire, the wheate purged in the floore,
 and before it be meate for man, is also ground in the
Ioh. 15. 12. mill, so must we be proued in affliction, fined in per-
 secution, and crushed to pieces, vnder the burthen of our
 owne miseries, that we may be made prepared bread for
 the Lord his owne spending.

Why then doth the Lord make such large promises to
 his Church of plenty, seeing it endureth continuall po-
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uertie? I answere, the Church of God must be considered after two sortes, the first as it is cleansed in the blood of Christ, and washed pure from all outward and notorious offences, vnto which estate pertainē all those outward promises of liberalitie in the scripture; The second is the declined estate or corrupted condition of euery one in the church, euen vnto the worldes ende. vnto this pertainē all the punishments, persecutions and tribulations, which the godly endure: which the Lord sendeth vpon them, that hee might by little and little scour vs from our transgressions, and weary vs with the miseries of this life, that we might the more earnestly desire the life to come: for the Lord doth here scourge vs that we should not be condemned with the world. Examples of these are most plentiful in the old testament of the Church of the Iews, & for as much as this perfectiō of the church being once lost, is like broken glasse, which can neuer be soldered againe, so the Church shall neuer attaine those promises in this life, but they are all referred to the life to come, where shall be no hunger, thirst, nakednes, pouerty, trauaile, famine, or sorrow, but all teares beeing wiped from the eyes of the faithfull, they shall then rest from their laboures, and receiue many thousand times, for euerie affliction which they heere endured, eternall felicity in the presence of Christ, when all worldings shall bee burned with vnquenchable fire.

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Exo. 2. 22.

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Iohn. 4. 7

libertie, yet we must take heede of two things; first that we neuer receiue any thing with condition of religion, or dooing the least thing against our owne knowledge, for idolaters desire nothing more then to winne mens soules to the deuill. Secondly, wee may not go vnto such when we may bee eased of the godly, for it is free necessitie that constraineth, not necessary libertie that permitte: By this wee learne, what to iudge of them which are dayly at talke and table with the wealthiest papists, Atheists, and carnall prophane persons, who care not for the losse of religion, so they may gaine by their friendship, esteeming more the feathers of a rich man, though vngodly, than the blood of a poore godly christian: they vse them too commonly for wealth & commoditie, not for neede or necessitie: these are seasoned in the leauen of vnrighteousnes, baked in the oven of hipocrisie, and shal one day be burned in the fire of euerlasting destruction, for they which for gaine loue their companie in this life, shal be partakers of their rewards in the life to come.

- Fiftly, by this wee note, that the Lorde doth euer provide for his faithfull seruantes in all their miseries.
- Psa. 37. 18.** 19. We see heere, these Iewes satisfied with plentie in Moab, that were almost famished with penurie at home: therefore saith Dauid. The Lord knoweth the daies of vpright men, and their inheritance shall bee perpetuall, they shall not be confounded in the perillous time, and in the daies of famine they shall haue enough. Most notable is that speech of Ioseph to his brethren, telling them that God sent him before to provide victualls for them, in that seuen yeares famine. So hee stirred vp Obadiah which hid fifty prophets in one caue, and fiftie in another, feeding them with bread and water, during the time of famine. Hee provided for Eliah first by the rauen, and after by the widdowe of *Zarephtha* multiplying her oyle and meale, for Eliah, her selfe, and her sonne. So he sent Elisa to warne the Shunamite woman of the seuen yeares famine, that shee should flye for her selfe, and liue where shee could. I might bee infinite in this point, to declare the bountifull liberality of the Lord, who euer provideth one remedie or other,

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to satisfie the continuall prayers of them that feare him : for we may say as Paul sayth, Wee are afflicted, yet wee are not in distresse, in pouerty, yet not ouercome of pouerty, we are persecuted, and yet not forsaken, cast down but we perish not. This is the mercifull kindnes of him who giueth soode to the young rauens that call vpon him, & maketh his sun to rise & shine both vpon good & bad. Yea we our owne selues haue experience in our owne country, for we which were wont with our abundance to helpe other nations about vs, yet now in our want we are succoured by them. How should the poore in many places be relieued, if it were not for the corne which commeth ouer-sea : therefore as the seuen plentifull yeares in Egypt, succoured the seauen deare yeares : euen so the Lord relieueth the misery of one time by the multitude of another. Therefore my brethren, let vs not say, the Lord hath forgotten, for although our desires be not satisfied, yet our bodies are not famished : yea, the Lord testifieth that he is as vnwilling to punish our deserts, and vtterly to deprive vs of our maintenance, as we are to depart from our pleasant pastime or dainty belly cheere. Poore Lazarus that was not releued with the rich mans crummes, yet was he comforted with the licking of the dogs, so much doth the Lord affect liberality and kindnes, that he commandeth brute beasts to execute his goodnes vpon his seruants.

Now let vs proceed to the second part of this scripture, and seeing we haue brought these strangers to their Inne at Moab, let vs heare their intertainment, & those things that happened vnto them after they came thither : for the parts we haue in the beginning set downe, which I trust you remember, and therefore we will to the words,

And they continued there. This is as much to say, as they found entertainment answerable to their expectation : they had liberty of residence granted, and obtained a place for their dwelling in safety. Where we first note the gentlenes or humanity of these heathen Moabits, who had learned by nature this pointe of curtesie, which is, friendlye to succour poore harbourlesse straungers : and no doubt but hee that watcheth
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the descending of sparrowes on the ground, directed this journey to Moab, for the accomplishing of his owne counsell, and prepared the heartes of these people, with fauour to relieue them. For as before hee guided the journey of Abrahams seruant to the Cittie of Machor, where Rebecca was, & framed hir answer according to his praier, euē so he cōducted these to Moab where Ruth was, and tempered the hearts of the wicked to giue these pilgrims a dwelling place among them. By the which we are taught what friendship or loue we owe to strangers which are come among vs, yea though we know not the purpose of their harts, yet we must doe good vnto them for the proportion of their bodies, that is because they are men. This is not a law written only in the booke of God but imprinted in the verie nature of euery one. Wee see these Moabits do it by nature & yet they had no religion in them, we know how the king of Egypt gaue commandement for Abraham, that none should hurt him or any of his possessions. Read but the Acts, of the Apostles, you shal see how barbarous nations receiued the church with curtesy, and some vppon their reporte beleue the doctrine of Christ. What shall wee then say to this beastlike behauour of many among vs, who will hardly permit poore Christian straungers to harbour among vs: if it were not for that they are men, & the children of Adam like our selues, yet because they call vppon the name of Christ, being of the household of faith, let vs doe good vnto them. But some will say, what shall wee doe vnto them if they will not ioine with vs in our religion? I answer, none must bee of Abrahams familye but those which will bee circumcised, that is, none must dwell with thee, but such as wil be of thy profession. Yet thou maiest for humanitie or curtesie receiue a Turke or a pagan, a Jew or an infidell, papist or heretike, to talke or table for a night or a small time, so thou keepe thy selfe from his pollutions. So did Iacob feast his idolotrous father in law and kinsmen when they pursued him to the mount of Gilead, with purpose to hurt him, and our Sauour Christ biddeth vs to feede our enemies and to giue them drinke if they thirste. So did Elischah, to the host of Siri-

Gen. 24. 13

Gen. 17. 13

14.

Gen. 31. 34.

Kin. 6. 23

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ans, who being sent to take him, yet when hee had taken them and lead them to the city, he suffered the king to do them no hurt, but refreshed them with meat and drinke, and sent them away in safetie. For our outward curteous receiuing of infidels is like coles of fire, to draw them in loue with our inward religion. We know how the Lord commaunded the Iewes to be good vnto strangers, because they were strangers in Egypt. Wee know how the Lord commended the straunge Samaritan beyond the priest and the Leuite, because hee succoured the poore wounded Iewe, which had fallen among thecues. And truly wee our selues may bee strangers in other Countries, therefore let vs doe good vnto them now that wee may receiue the like of them againe, for this is the lawe and the Prophets. *Then Elimelech*, when they had escaped one daunger, they fell into another sorrow, when by the mercifull kindnesse of the Lord they were ioyntly come together into Moab, and there quietly seated, escaped the arrowes of famine, by the hand of God, the father of the family, the nearest and the dearest vnto them, dieth in plentie.

Luk. 10.
30, 38.

Where we note the verie lot of all the godly, namely, that the end of one sorrow is the beginning of another, like the drops of raine distilling from the top of a house, when one is gone another followeth, like a ship vppon the sea, being on the top of one waue, presently is cast downe to the foote of another, like the seede which being spread by the sower is hanted by the foules, beeing greene and past their reache, is endaungered by froste and snow, being passed the winter shurt, by beastes in summer, being ripe is cut with the sickle, threshed with flaile, purged in the floore, ground in the mill, baked in the ouen, chewed in the teeth, and consumed in the stomacke. This made Dauid say, Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord deliuereth out of all. But be not discomforted oh my brethren, for thorough many afflictions must wee enter into the kingdome of heauen, and by affliction wee are made like to the sonne of God. But to the matter. We see here their sweete fellowship is preuented by death, which in deed is the end of al

Psa. 34, 19.

Act. 14, 22.
Hcb. 2, 10

Isa. 17. 4.

worldly friendship, This is a good lesson for all worldlings to remember, how the Lord disappointeth all their purposes, and ouerthroweth their counsells more vainer then vanity. The merchant hauing obtained his banke, promisethest and security to himselfe; the husbandman hauing gathered his fruits, neuer doubteth but he shall spend them, & prouideth for more; the Gentleman comming to his lands, thinketh his reuenues and pleasant life, will indure alway: like the Apostles when Christ was transfigured in the mount, presently they would build tabernacles of residence; but as the cloude came betwixt them and heauen, and bereaued them of their purpose: euen so sodainly will death come and depriue you of your profits, call the marchant from his banke, the husbandman from his farme, the Gentleman from his lands, the noble man from his honour, the prince from his kingdome, the Lady from her pleasures, as this Elimelech was sodainly from wife and children.

Rom. 2. 7.

Secondly, by these words we note the goodnes of God toward both the dead man, and also wife and children: for no doubt but they all desired, to be settled in some place or other; and here the Lord suffereth the husband with wife and family, to be quietly seated before their separation. He might haue called him away in his iourney, as he was comming, & then oh how would it haue grieved both him and them: him, to leaue a poore comfortles widdow and children behind, without dwelling or maintenance, for home again they could not returne, by reason of the famine, and to goe forth on the iourney without a guide, was like as if a ship were set on the sea without a mariner. Therefore in suffering them all to come safe to Moab, and there to liue till they got fauour and dwelling, and also maintenance, was a singular fauour of the Lord towards both, that howsoeuer they were afflicted, yet they were not left destitute. And this teacheth vs, that in al our afflictions we receiue especiall blessings at the hands of God, for this end that we should not be swallowed vp of sorrowe. There is no sicknesse but it is eyther short and sharpe, or els tedious and light, if it bee sodaine and verie extreame.

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the continuance of it is but short, if it be long and tedious, it hath some time of ease, some time of more quietnes, so that in al our miſeries we may ſay with the godly, Pſa, 124.
 If the Lord had not bene on our ſide we had bene ſwallowed quick: he tempereth the ſodaineſt ſhowers with leaſt continuance, and the longeſt Winter hath many faire daies. Be ſtrong therfore my brethren and ſiſters, for ſurely the Lord will ſtabliſhe your hearts, feare not all the daungers of the worlde: though as many troubles compaſſe vs, as there were Sirians about Eliſeah, yet liſte vp your eyes, there are many thouſands more with vs 2. King. 6.
 then are againſt vs. He that ſuffereth none to bee tempted about their power, will not lay more vppon vs then we are able to beare: but as he wreſtled with Iacob with one hand, he held him vp with the other, ſo though he affliſt with one arme, hee ſhall ſuſtaine with the other.
Which tooke them wiues Now wee are come to the childrē, & the holy ghoſt expreſſeth the frendſhip which they receiued of the Moabits after the death of the father, which is, their mariage with their daughters: Where firſt of all it may be demanded in this place, ſeeing the Lord forbiddeth all ſtrang mariages, whither theſe ſons of Elimelech did not offend againſt this law: we know that the Deut, 7. 3.
 vnmarried are at libertie, to mary whome they will, onely in the Lord: now the Moabits were heathen people, and ſtrangers from God his couenant, and therfore theſe perſons married not in the Lord. To which I anſwere briefly, that the Lord forbiddeth mariages with Infidels, for two cauſes; firſt, when wee may lawfully and without daunger ioyne our ſelues to them that are godly, and will perſumptuouſly for worldly reſpects, run to the daughters of men: ſecondly that wee ſhould reſtaine from all ſuch mariages where wee are like to bee drawne away from our profeſſion, as we ſee in Solomon. But theſe I. Kin. 11. 4.
 ſonnes of Elimelech offended in none of theſe. For firſt they were now ſtraungers and had no other choyce, and ſecondly it appeareth by that which followeth that they were both well perſwaded in religion. For as Moſes married a Madianiſh woman, and was blameleſſe, and Salman the ſonne of Naſſon, the Exo. 2. 21.
Math. 1. 5.
 prince

Nehc. 9.

1.2.3.

prince of the Iewes, married with Rahab, (which both were the parents of Boaz mentioned hereafter) and was faultles, nay it was done by the permission of Iosuah, & therefore lawfull; euen so these straunge Iewes moued with the same reasons, chused the like mariages. But some will say, the Iewes which had married strange wiues, in the captiuitie of Babilon, might haue alledged this against Nehemiah, that they were in captiuitie, & had no woman to take but strangers. To the which I answer, if they had so objected, they had spoken vntrueth, and so would Nehemiah haue replied, for there were Iewishe women captiues as well as men; and further I say, that this their marrying of strange women, was the cause of the destruction of many Iewish women, who being forsaken of their owne people, must of necessitie bee married to infidels, which could neuer returne to Ierusalem. Again, these sons of Elimelech by their marriage, gayned greater fauour of the Moabits; but especially the hande of God was in it, that when they both should be dead, Ruth might be married to Boaz, and be made a mother of Christ.

Ec. 31. 15.

u l. 1. 13.

First therefore we note out of this, that as these Moabits were kind to the father in giuing him residence, so they were louing to the sons in giuing them wiues: a notable example of humane curtesie, giuen vnto vs by these heathens, that we with the like fauour should entertaine strangers. But many couetous parents in these daies, which would be accompted Christians, are so farre from doing this vnto strangers, that they will hardly doe the like to their naturall Countreimen; rather imitating that vngodly Laban, who made marchaundise of his daughters, then godly Caleb in the bestowing them on Othniel be he neuer so poore, if they haue deserued well of Church or comon wealth, rather desiring to aduance their posteritie in the glory of the world, the rather discharge their duties in the presence of God. They will say they ayme at this, the feare of the Lorde, when as if they had matched their children with Turkes or Infidels they would not or could not be more profane then these, sauing onely these are outwardly obedient to a Christian prince.

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prince, that they might with more libertie followe their licentious Atheisme, when as peraduenture the other woulde not so dissemble: so that goods, and not goodnesse, the worlde and not the worde, earthly vanitie, and not heauenly felicitie our parents ayme at. But what shall wee saye of them that force their chyl- dren not onely to match agaynst their mindes; but to marrie with publike papists and knowen recusants, onely for thinges of this life. Truly I aunswere, that it is against these that the Lord speaketh, when hee sayth, Deut. 7. 3. You shall not take their daughters to your sonnes, nor giue your daughters to their sonnes; but as they haue married without the counsell of the Lorde, in murdering the fruites of their owne bodies; euen so they shall prosper without the blessing of God, in confounding the soules of their owne posteritie: and as the children of the Iewes which were borne of strange women, were separated from the new founded Temple, euen so these shall bee excluded from the euerlasting Ierusalem.

And they tarried there. This time of their abode in Moab, signifieth the great continuance of this miserie. First for the Iewes at home, who endured famine: and secondly for these abroad, which liued among Infidelstennyeeres together. It is a fearefull thing wyth vs that wee haue but one yeeres famine, oh then wee thinke that the Lorde hath forgotten to bee mercifull. But we haue heard alredie of famines of great continuance, that in *Iosephs* time was seauen yeeres together, that in *Dauids* time was three yeeres and a halfe, and this miserie lasted tennyeeres together. Wherein many godly persons did patiently indure it. How is it then that for this little dearth among vs, there are so greate exclamations for corne and plentie, such horrible blasphemies against the Lord himselfe, saying: Shall this indure alwaie? Was there euer any poore people thus afflicted? Is this the fruit of the Gospell? Are these the fauours of God and his righteousnesse, in keeping his promise? with such like, too horrible to be suffered,

suffered as if the Lorde were not able to releue vs , or else were vniust in punishing our sinnes , howe can that bee, seeing hee calleth for repentance , and amende-ment , and then promiseth plentie and abundaunce, These Saintes endured some three, some seuen, and o-ther tenne yeeres famine , and yet wee saye, was there euer such a people thus afflicted like to vs with one yeres dearth?

They were driuen to wander abroad in their ene- mies Country for many yeeres together ; shall wee then thinke it such a misery to goe two or three miles for our corne? They aduentured the losse of their liues , and we are afraide of the lessening or diminishing of our goods . And shall wee yet say , there was neuer a-ny people tormented like vnto vs? Yea , I adde this, that euen at this daye there are people in the worlde which scant in all their liues doe eate any bread , but onely the barke of trees , with some other vnseasonable fish ; others liue on the rootes of the earth , some on the fruites of trees. And what shall I say more , our wicked- nesse is greater then our want, our sore is smaller then our sinne, our transgressions haue deserued to be puni- shed with the scourge , and yet wee are scarce corrected with the rodde , our complaints are greater then our hurte, and our murmuring exceedeth our misery: there- fore wee haue greater cause to tremble at that which hangeth ouer our heades , then to feare or crye for this which we already suffer, for it is hardly the beginning of sorrow.

So Mahlon and Chilion. Now when they were com- passed about with the friendes of their wiues , which did promise securitie , then after a fewe yeeres spent in safety , the Lorde called them away after their fa- ther. Where wee see our former doctrine iustified, that the ende of one sorrow was the beginning of ano- ther. When they were moeste like to continue , then they gaue ouer, as it were, in the armes of their wiues, and the sight of their aged mother , to whome no doubt, this was the greatest grieue of all other, that now
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being left destitute both of husband and children, she should without comfort liue with the Moabites, and without ioye returne agayne vnto her owne Countrey, as a bird robbed of her young ones. Yet seeing this is our worldly lot still to endure misery, let vs set both our shoulders vnder the burthen, if it be too heauy, let vs flee to the finisher of our faith with zealous and earnest prayers, desiring him eyther to ease or to remooue his hand. But seeing wee haue spoken of this before, this shall suffice at this time to serue for a remembrance.

Then she arose. When her friends were departed, and her selfe left comfortles, yet the Lord remembered her, for euen then came the rumor vnto her, that the famine was ceased in Iewry, that the Lord had visited the sicknes of his people, and restored the plenty of the earth againe, and therefore it is time for her to be hastening home againe, for heere the holy Ghost setting downe her returne, and the cause of the same, sheweth that it was euen then when her children were dead, for what should a godly woman liue there, where were none that could strengthen hir in the wayes of the Lord, but rather prouoke her to imbrace infidelity; And againe, euen at that time when she was most comfortlesse for the losse of her children came this rumor vnto her of the restoring of her Countrey, so that now Naomi, thou art here in Moab a sorrowfull pilgrime, go home to thy Countrey and be a ioyfull inhabitant: indeede thy children are dead, but thou shalt haue greater comfort of thy ancient acquaintance. What knowest thou, but now the Lord hath called thee to consolation, whereas of late, thou mightest thinke, he had wrought thy confusion.

By this wee note, that the Lord deserreth to helpe till greatest necessity, euen as hee stayed the stroke of Abraham when hee was at the verie instant to cut off Gene. 22. little Isaks necke. So wee reade that when the king of 10. 11. Assiria had inuaded the kingdome of Ezechia, wonne 2. King. 19. his Cities, subdued his Countrey, conquered his people, and had not left him two thousand horsemen, & being 2. destitute

destitute of all helpe, then the Lord raised vp the king of Ethiop, who called the Assyrians from the siege of Ierusalem: What shall I say of Lazarus raised from death?

Of the deliuerance of Peter out of the hands of Herod,

Ioh. 11. 43. the daie before he should haue beene Martyred? Of the

Act. 12. 7. 8 shipwracke wherein Paul was, and yet not one of them

Act. 27. 44 were lost. And excellent is that of Christ, sleeping in the

Math. 8. 25. shippe on a pillowe, suffered his disciples to bee so long

26. tossed with the violence of the sea, till they cryed out,

Lord saue, we perish, and then he awaked, rebuked the

rage of the windes, and stilled the stormes of the sea,

and a peaceable calme followed. This is that preferua-

tive against desperation, which must staie our mindes

on the leasure of the Lorde: wee must not at the first

look for our desires, but as Abraham and Zacharia were

old before they had any children: and yet in the end the

Lord promised and also perfourmed, euen so when we

haue least hope, for obtaining of our desires, wee most

often receiue them. For the Lord deferreth our requests

for the triall of our faith and patience, that like as the

wheate corne groweth not, till it bee dead, euen so his

workes do not answere our expectation, till they seeme

to vs impossible: that as the most precious pearles are

farthest brought, and longest in comming, when wee

haue them we keep them more carefully, euen so his ex-

cellent mercies, being with difficultie obtained shuld be

esteemed more thankfully Therefore be of good com-

fort, you that nowe sorrow, for you shall bee comforted,

you that now hunger for you shall be satisfied, you that

now weepe for you shall laugh; the Lord will shortly

come, beare but a little and he will wipe away all teares

from your eies, & then oh how happy shal they be which

haue trusted in him.

That the Lorde had Visited. This is the last parte of this scripture, being the reason that moued her to return into her Country. O it is as if the holy ghost had sayde, The Lord looked vpon the afflicted estate of his people, & supplied their want of food. To visit, in the scriptures is taken two waies, first to punish, as when God saith in the second commaundement, that he will visit the

sinne

I. Cor. 15.

36.

Exo. 20. 5.

& 32. 34.

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sinne of the fathers vpon the children, vnto the third and fourth generation : secondly it signifieth some times to pardon or to shew mercy, as that of Zachary. The Lord hath visited and redeemed his people, that is, hee hath shewed mercy in redeming his people. In this later sense it must be taken in this place . Now the word properly signifieth to goe to see , and is referred to them that are sicke, which by a metaphor is applied to sinne, for sinne is the sicknes of the soule, and is very fitly applied to punishments sent of God, for when he scourgeth hee cometh to see, as he said of Sodome: I will go downe and see whither it be altogether so, if not, that I may know ; for he cometh to see vs in our miseries , as a Phisitian to his patient, whom he hath first or before made sick with his potion or corasue, and bringeth a wholsome or speedie remedy with him . Where wee note the miserable estate of men in the sicknesse of sinne, or vnder any of God his iudgments, as dearth & famine, warre or pestilence; that euen as sicke personnes are not able to helpe or comfort themselues, or to take any pleasure in their wealth, though they possessed the whole world: so if wee be oppressed in the punishment of our iniquities, we can not or may not rest in our selues but in the Lord our Phisitian and watchman : for if the Lord shut who can open, if hee wound who can heale, if hee curse who can blesse, hee that hath the bond or writing must discharge the debt, & the Lord that stroke must bind vs vp again. Oh my dearly beloued brethren , now are the children come to the birth, and there is no strength to be deliuered, for this is the day of tribulation . Now are we in the ballaunce of the Lord either to visite our offences with his famin, or to scourge our sinnes with the rod of dearth Esa. 37. 3. if either of both continue, what end can we loke for but the pining of our bodies , and the consuming of our soules? Whither shall we go to escape the iudgements of the Lord . we are already clogged with his irons and fast bolted, if we striue to shaker them of , what doe wee else but rebell against the power of the highest? If they con-
tinue

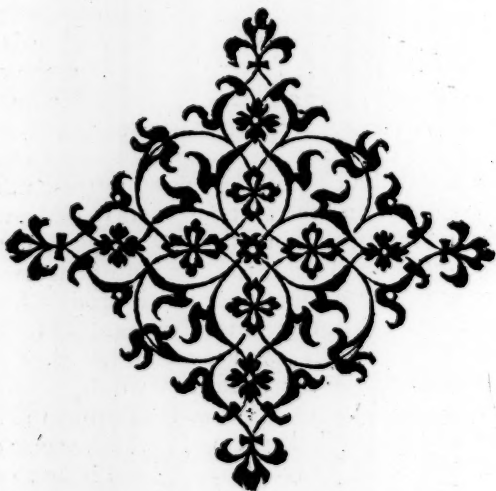
Luk. 2. 68.

Hof. 4. 9.
Math. 25.

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tinue, we are but miserable prisoners and can looke for nothing but the fearefull day of execution. Let vs turne to the Iudge before that daie, and send vp our prayers as our dearest friends vnto his Sonne, that he may visite vs with the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, that he may sue out our pardon, and be intreated for our transgressions, that we may obtaine the release of our present miserie, the remouing of his iudgements, the increase of the fruites of the earth, that he would visite vs, in giuing our dayly bread, to satisfie the poore with his goodnesse, and giue vs all the bread of this life to banish our dearth, and the bread of life to escape damnation. And thus much for this time. Now let vs giue praise to God.

The end of the first Lecture.



The second Lecture.

Chapter 1, Verſe 7. to the 18.

7. Wherefore ſhe departed out of the place where ſhe was, & her two daughters in law with her, and they went on their way, to returne vnto the land of Iudah.

8. Then Naomi ſaid vnto her two daughters in lawe, Go, reſurne each of you vnto her owne mothers houſe: the Lorde ſhew fauour vnto you as you haue done with the dead, and with mee.

9. The Lord graunt that eyther of you may finde reſt in the houſe of her husband: and when ſhee had kiſſed them, they liſt vp their voice and wept.

10. And they ſaid vnto her, ſurely we will returne with thee vnto thy people.

11. But Naomi ſaid: turne againe my daughters, for what cauſe will you goe with mee? are there any mee ſonnes in my wombe that they may be your husbands?

12. Turne againe my daughters: go your way: for I am too old to haue an husband: If I ſhould ſay I had hope, and if I had an husband this night, yea if I had borne ſonnes:

13. Would ye carrie for them, til they were of age? would you be deferred for them from taking any husbands? nay my daughters, for it griueth mee much for your ſakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out againſt me.

14. Then they liſt vp their voice and wept againe, and Orpah kiſſed her mother in law and departed, but Ruth abode with her ſtill.



N theſe wordes is expreſſed howe Naomi departeth out of Moab, to go into the land of Iewrie. The wordes diuide themſelues into two partes: the firſt is the iourney, in this ſeauenth verſe. The ſecond parte, is the communication, in the next ſeuē verſes. The iourney is deſcribed by the perſons, which were, Naomi & her two daughters in lawe.

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The communication which they had by the way, principally consisteth in the perswasion of Naomi to her daughters, that they should returne backe againe: and first shee speaketh in the eight and nine verses. Her speech containeth two partes, the first is the counsell shee giueth to them, in these wordes, *Go returne*. The seconde is her prayer for them, which is double, or consisting of two parts. The first is generall, in these wordes, *The Lord shew fauour*, to the end of that verse. The second is speciall in the ninth verse, in these words, *The Lord grant you that you may finde rest, &c.* Which beeing spoken, they list vp their voice and wept, beeing sorrowfull for this news, and therfore they answered in the tenth verse that they will returne with her to her people: In the next verse to the fourteenth, Naomi confirmeth her former counsell by waighty arguments, which are expressed in her questions, and they are taken from theyr second marriages.

The first is in the eleauenth verse: that shee had no mo sonnes, to be their husbands, neyther already borne, or which hereafter might bee borne, therefore their labour would be but lost if they went with her, seeing she could prouide them no mo husbandes. This is amplyfied in the eleuenth and twelfth verse.

The second reason is in the thirteenth verse, that although she had now children borne, yet it would be to long to stay for them till they were of age: much more she hauing none borne: and least her daughters should thinke shee cared not for them, shee addeth in the thirteenth verse, that it grieued her more for theyr sakes, that is, the loue she beareth to them, then for her owne, but it is the hande of God, and therefore shee is contented. Lastly in the 14. verse is declared the effecte of this communication, what it wrought, for Orpah departed as a woman ouercome by these worldly perswasions, but Ruth abideth still with her. Of these let vs briefly speake in order as they lye, by the permission and assistance of the almightie.

And she arose. This iourney of Naomi to her owne people, as in the former verse wee heard was yndertaken,

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ken, when shee heard, that the Iewes were deliuered from their famine; so it is more commendable if we consider the obiections, lets and hinderances, that may bee made against it. First the way was very long betweene Moab and Bethlehem, which might terrifie an old woman: but if any say that it was no longer to returne then it was to come downe, I answere, when she came thither shee had her husband and children to beare her companie, but now shee was to returne alone and therefore the iourney would be the more tedious. Secondly, the consideration of her age might haue hindered this trauaile, for her withered body would be wearied in the iourney; and what knew shee but that she might die in the iourney and that among strangers, who peraduenture would haue no regard of her age, honour or honestie: againe, no doubt, but she had some wealth in Moab, which of necessitie she must be constrained to leaue behinde her, and for euer to loose, with many other such grievous thoughts which might accomber her troubled breast. But notwithstanding all these shee proceedeth on her intended iourney, committing her selfe to the preservation of God in all places, who she knew would giue her some comforts for the aduersitie shee had endured:

Where first of all we note the duction of al the godly, if with Naomi they are far from the companie of the faithfull, or compelled to departe from them vppon the like occasion, as famine, pouertie, persecution and such like, that when occasion shall bee giuen, they returne with Naomi to the temple, to the people, to the Arke, to the gospell of the Lord. For as God saide to Eliah, when hee was in mount Horeb. What doest thou here Eliah? euen so he speaketh to all persecuted pilgrims, and poore true Christians which are at the gates and Tables of carnall atheists, the enemies of Christ, What doe you heere? there is come and bread in Israel againe, the Church, your brethren, haue now receiued maintenance: returne to the place of sacrifice: they that worshipping must worship God at Ierusalem: the mountaines of Samaria are no place of God his worship, but at Shilo is his tabernacle and his dwelling in Sion. This we may reade practi-

1. Kin. 13. 9

Ioh. 2. 22

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sed of the auncient fathers long ago. When Moses had dwelt fortie yeares in Madian, then the Lord bid him
 Exo. 3. 11. returne to his poore brethren againe. David beeing in
 1. Sam. 27. great securitie with the king of Gath, yet the Lord would
 9. not suffer him there to dwell. And as the Israelites might
 not dwell with the Egyptians, but must go into the land
 2. King. 8. of Canaan, so the Lords people must abide but where
 he appointeth the. And as the Shunamite woman, after
 the seuen yeres famine returneth to her wonted dwelling,
 euen so must not wee linger with recusant papists, a-
 theists, swearers, blasphemers and open despisers of God
 his ministers and ministerie.

Secondly wee may note in this verse a godly example
 of holy obedience & commendable friendship, for here
 the daughters in law are going with their mother to the
 land of Iewry. Where, either for religion or loue which
 they beare to their mother in law, they forsake both
 Countrey and friendes to go with her. Was it not suffi-
 cient for them to take strangers for their husbands; who
 being dead, and they at liberty, but they must go from
 their owne kindred, with a mother in law: was it not wel
 for them to abide with her so long as shee would abide
 with them, and was able to maintaine them, but now
 when shee had forsaken her dwelling and wealth, must
 they accompany her in her pouerty. Surely it seemeth,
 that as Paul saith to the Correnthians, hee sought not
 theirs but them, so these women desire rather the pre-
 sence then the wealth of Naomi, O excellent obedience
 and godly frendship, worthy to bee registred with eter-
 Pro. 17. 17. nall memory. They had not past ten yeares space to learne
 this point of religion that it is true friendship to loue at
 all times, whether it be in wealth or prosperity, in want
 or aduersity. We haue many old professors in Christia-
 nitie, which haue not profited thus much in twentie
 thirtie or fortie yeres profession. They say to their neigh-
 2. King. 19. bors as Ioram messenger said to Iehu, Is it peace? so they
 17. aske, is it wealth? is it riches? is it honour? or is it fauour
 of prince or Gentleman that dwelleth neere them. As if
 they should say, if thou be wealthy, thou shalt haue my
 friendship, but if thou be poore, then as Nabal answered
 Dauid

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Dauids messenger, what is Dauid? and what is the sonne of Ishai? so, what art thou? I care not for thy company, get thee from my presence, I can abide no such beggers. Is this the fruite of religion, condemned of the heathens, abhorred of the brute beastes, hated of the wicked, and yet practised of or among christians, surely I had rather be a friendly Moabite then a thousand such carnall Isra-
lites: Yea, the very ciuill honest men among vs will rise in iudgement against vs in this point, they will liue without hypocrysie, we dissemble in al vaine glory, our friendship is like the company of the dolphin, if it be faire weather shee will neuer be from the ship, but if a storme come, shee withdraweth her fellowship. Away wyth this most beastlike, yea rather vnnaturall smiling vppon prosperitie, but grim and strange countenances vppon the afflicted, eyther loue at all time, which is Salomons friendship, or loue at no time, which is Sathans amity.

Pro. 27,
17.

Then said Naomi. The counsell that this godly Naomi giueth vnto her daughters, is simply that they should reurne to their owne parents, as if they should say vnto them, Be aduised my daughters, some will thinke you very vnnaturall, that you forsake your owne mothers, to go with me your mother in lawe, and forsake your own country to go vnto a strange place: the iourney is long & tedious, you are tender and weak, better return before we be fargone: to be wise too late, is to repent too sone, care not for me, the Lord wil inable me to go as wel alone as with your company. Where we first of all note 'a most godly example of mother-like loue and godly charitye, for if Naomi had gone alone, it could not chuse but be farre more dangerous then with company, and none could receiue any disaduauntage by her counsell beside her selfe, yet wee see shee careth not for her owne commoditie so she might procure the welfare of her daughters. Shee might haue frendlye accepted theyr owne proffers, and if any danger had come, shee might haue said, shee did not entreate them, it was theyr owne vp seeking, yet shee dealeth more plainely with them in telling them the danger, & as before they desire more her companie then her wealth, euen so now she loueth their

their companie wel, but couſelleth their ſalty better. This is the duty of all that feare God, as the apoſtle ſaith. Let euery man ſeek another and not their owne good; this was ſo decre vnto the Lord himſelfe, that he commaunded by Moſes, that if their neighbors cattel went aſtray, they ſhould bring them home again. Doth the Lord take care of oxen, & not much more for men? But oh where is the carefull keeping of this commandement? now euery man ſaith, euery man for himſelf and God for vs all but rather, how ſhal the Lord be for vs, when we are not for one another? Now this wicked world is full of deceitfull bargaines, now mens houſes and lands are bought ouer the heads of their young and vnthriftie ſons: now mens farmes and leaſes are foreſtalled by other, that they themſelues cannot enioy them: ſuch buying, and ſelling, coſoning and deceiuing, borrowing and lending vpon vſury, taking of fines, rayſing of rents vndoing of the poore, and thruſting the weakeſt to the wall, as if charity were forgotten, and the precept of the Lord had neuer beene written, and finally as though all were our owne which wee can get in our handling. Many giue counſell like lawyers for their fees, but few like Naomi, for their conſciences. They licke their owne fingers, as the prouerb goeth, but few wil caſt any ſalt on their neighbors meat, if they can get aduantages of their neighbours vpon ſtatute they ſue the extremity, as if they were infidels. They will not ſaye as Abraham to Lot; If thou take the right hand, I will take the left: that is, my brother my neighbor take thou the choiſe, I wiſh not thy wrong, aſke cou, ſell, & let there be no occaſion of ſtrife between vs: men will hardly giue either coate or cloake in theſe daies, by ſuffering iniurie, they will rather take both, & although they thinke it better to giue almes then to take, yet they had rather take bribes & rewards then to giue. Oh my beloued, let vs at the length bee ruled by the counſell of the Lord, & eſteeme better of others then of our ſelues, help as many as we can, but hinder none. Cursed are they that lay ſtumbling blockes before the blind, and giue euill counſell for their owne aduantage.

Secondly, by theſe words we may gather to whom wi-
dowes,

1. Cor. 10.

24.

Deut. 22. 7.

Gen. 23. 9.

Phil. 2. 3.

Eccl. 19. 14.

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dowes belong, their husbands being dead, namely, to *their owne mothers house*: that is, to their parents: if the parents of their husbands will not prouide for them. Therefore it is that the Lord comaunded, if the daughter of a priest were a widdowe, and returned to her fathers house, hauing no children, she might eate of the peace offerings of the children of Israel. And Paul giueth charge to the godly in his time, that if any of their kindred were a widow, of their own costs they should prouide for her, and not charge the church. This is a profitable doctrine both for parents and children: for parents that they be carefull to bestowe their chyldren in godly marriages, where they may be well prouided for, neyther must they then cast them off, but if neede be receiue them to their owne families againe: for children, seeing the Lord doth thus commend their welfare, & careth for their widdow head, as wel as their virginity, that they cast not theselues away vpon euery one they can loue, without the consent of their parents, wherby they impouerish their friends, vndoe themselues, & bring a wofull curse vpon their innocent posteritie. Thirdly & lastly, by this counsel of Naomi we gather, that if the father be dead, we owe the same dutie to our mother which is a liue, for she saith, to her own mothers house. And Salomon sayth, it is foolishnesse or wickednesse to despise ones mother. The Lorde curseth him in the Lawe, that despiseth or curseth his mother as well as his father. In the fift comaundement he commandeth to honor the mother equally, or as well as the father. Many thinke they may bee more bolde vvith their mothers, because they are more tender ouer them, than vvith their fathers, but the godly must knowe, that vpon paine of Gods heauie curse, they must followe the counsell of their mothers vvith Iacob, as well as the aduice of their fathers vvith Esau. And the Lord doth often cloath the weaker vessell vvith more honor, that therby wee might learne to continue our obedience to our parents.

The Lord shew. In these wordes the generall blessing or praier is contained, which Naomi maketh for her two daughters, where she praierh to God for his fauor vpon the

Le. 22. 13

1. Tim. 5.

Pro. 19. 2

Deut. 27.

Gen. 17. 1

as they shewed fauor to her, and to their dead husbands, as if she should say, I wish no more acceptable blessing vpon you, than you haue done to others.

Where we briefly note, that our duties which we discharge to parents or husbands, are as pledges before the Lord to doo good vnto vs. This maketh him delight to poure his blessings vpon vs, when he seeth we dutifully walke in his presence, and it prouoketh those to whom wee offer this obedience, to poure out their prayers for vs into the eares of the almighty. Euen so the neglect of our duties, the contempt of our parents, and the disobedience of our superiours, procureth both the curse of God and them, not onely in this life, but also in the life to come.

The Lord. These wordes are her speciall prayer for her daughters marriage, and are thus in effect, I can pray for no greater worldly blessing vpon you than this, that eyther of you being young women, may find quiet and louing husbandes, and bee made ioyfull mothers of many children.

Where wee first of all note, that as parents are bound by the law of nature to prouide marriages for theyr children, so they are willed by the law of God, to pray for theyr prosperous estate, both before and also after they bee married. And truelye this neuer sinketh into the head of carnall parents, who are able to doo more with their purses than with their prayers, who wish extremities to their children, minding onely a wealthie, & not a quiet life. Oh how are wee beholding to such ignorant parents, which onely take care for vs that we might be lifted higher, when they prouide not for vs against the stormie tempests of vnquiet liues, and the dangerous downfalls of worldly confusion? Let them neuer thinke that their wishes are prayers, when they say, I would God my son were married to such a mans daughter, or my daughter to such a mans sonne. This is all they aime at, simple and bare wealthy marriages, neuer minding or praying for God his blessing vpon them.

Secondly, by this prayer of Naomi, we note the dutie of all husbands towards theyr wiues, which is, that they should prepare rest for them: their mindes being troubled

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led, they should pacifie them with counsell : their bodies diseased, they should comfort them with their loue: their estate endangered, they should deliuer them with carefulnesse, and finally, they shoulde loue their wiues as theyr owne soules,

The Prophet Dauid compareth a wife to a vine, which if it be not propped vp with a staie by the hande of the gardener, what shall it doo but wallow on the ground & remaine fruitlesse? Euen so the best wiues if they bee not carefully maintained by the kindnes of their husbands, their sorrowfull liues will increase their curse, yea, & destroye the fruit of their owne bodies. Psa. 128.

The Apostle wisheth husbands to loue their wiues, as Christ loued his Church, which is not onely mindful to deliuer it out of present dangers, but also hath redeemed it from the curse of eternall damnation: so the husbands duties are to prouide for the temporall welfare of their wiues bodies, and specially for the euerlasting saluation of their soules: that they twaine which in this life, haue had corporall society, in the life to come might enioy eternall felicitie. Now this condemneth the carnall behauiour of wretched husbandes, who vse their wiues as their seruants and not as themselves, who deal with them as men do with nuts, first they reach and trauaile for them, and hauing gotten them, they take out the kernell but they tread the shell vnder their feete: so they hauing gotten the wealth, the beawtie, the health and young yeares of their wiues, despise their gray hayres, which are their greatest credite, as the shells wherein the kernel was, giuen thē ouer in their weakest daies, wherein they want greatest comfort. Is this the rest you prouide for your wiues, to cause them to weare their bodies with weary trauailes, to consume their minds with daily griefe to procure their paines by bearing of children, and to lay the greatest burthens vpon the smallest beastes, for so some most wretchedly terme them. Oh looke vnto it, this measure will the Lord measure to you againe, yee vnnaturall husbands which follow your pleasures, and pastimes abroad, and neglect your profits and sorrowfull wiues at home, To fly ouer the seas with vnnecessary iourneyes Eph. 5. 29.

.Pet. 3.7.

iourneyes, to frequent the company of suspected women, to follow the counsell of vaine persons, spending their patrimonies, & bringing theselues, their wiues, & posterity to woful misery, Is this to dwel with your wiues like men of knowledge? Is this to giue honor vnto the as y^e weaker vessels? Is this to account them the heyres of the same grace? & finally, is this to see their prayers be not interrupted? Nay rather, there are many thousand husbands which neuer either could or would pray with their wiues, that think neither vpon heauē nor hel, and haue no knowledge of their duties towards God or their neighbours, (much lesse to their wiues) than brute beasts, carnal infidels, prophane atheists, the murderers of theselues & of their own posterity. Oh fearful danger that hangeth euer your heads whō neither the lawes of God can compel to learne their duties, or men instruct the to amend their liues. But you my beloued, who are guiltles in this point are the blessed of the Lord, & forsake not your carefulnes alreedy begun, that you loose not your reward. Thirdly, by this praier we obserue the duties of wiues or women in families, namely, that they shuld be peaceable theselues, for if they seeke peace they must ensue peace, and if their ioy consist in the quietnes of the family, they must be carefull they breake not the vanity. If like Ismael, their hands be against al, the hands of all will be against them, if they will bee the louing turtles, they must not be the chattering pies, if they be the vines, their fruit must be grapes, & out of grapes commeth wine, & wine reioiceth the hart of man, so women must reioyce their husbands & families. Some women wil neuer be at rest til they beare rule, & wil say their husbands loue them not, except for their sakes they will displace their seruants, fall out with their neighbours, enuy their friends, and in all things follow their mindes: such men giue not peace, to their wiues, but swoords to slay themselves with all. The harkening ouer much to womens counsell, old Adam and wee his posterity may for euer lament, yet godly men may heare their godly wiues, remembring alway themselves to bee the head & the choise to rest in them either to like or dislike their counsell. *And they answered.* This is the answer of these

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women to the counsel & blessing of their mother in law, wherein they refuse to returne, & promise to go with her to her owne people, as if they should say, wee are rather bound vnto thee, then to our own mothers, & for thy sake whose godly conuersatiō we know, are we drawn in loue with the whole people: so that in these words they testifie their louing affectiō to their mother, their desire to be with her among her people; and the cause vndoubtedly to be her godly & wise conuersation with the in the land of Moab. When we note the duty of al the faithfull, which is, so to walke that other by their good example may be drawne to loue the trueth. For surely these women liked wel of the religiō of Naomi, but much better of her conuersation, as a thing they better vnderstoode then the other. For this point, the Apostle warneth that wee walke in wisdom because of them that are without. And Peter saith to the dispersed Iewes of his time, that they must haue a good conuersation among the gentils, insomuch as their enemies might haue no occasion to speake against them. And our sauior saith, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good workes, & glorifie your father which is in heauen. For as the vnbeleeuing husband may be wonne by the godly behauiour of the beleeuing wife, so many infidells & carnall persons, are sooner drawne to the Lord by the workes which they see, then by the words which they heare. Seeing, this is plaine by the word of God, where shal I beginne to complaine of this our vnhappy age, wherein are but few talkers of God his word, but much fewer walkers, when the Gospell of Christ is made the cloake of wickednes? Oh how grieuously is the Church of God rent in sunder by daily disquietnes, insomuch as there is no peace amōg vs. Can the infidells & papists say of vs, as old Emor said of Iacob & his family, These men are men of peace, therefore let vs be circumcised with them? What peace is ther left in the Church of God? Truly we are like vnto a tree, wee agree all in the body of religiō, but as the branches spread themselues an hundred waies, so in our indifferentest pointes of religion there is little or no vnitie. There is no care had of giuing offences vnto the weak, there

Col. 4. 5.

1. Pet. 1. 12.

Luk 3. 16.

Gen. 34. 23.

is no conscience to stay the slander of the Gospell. Oh how grievous is it, that many nowe a dayes will defende their dissimulation, by saying, Take heed to our wordes, and not to our deedes: liue as we say, and not as we do, making Christianity like the profession of Pharisees, which say and doo not. Esteeming of religion like the occupation of a Smith, wherein one is discharged by blowing, and another by beating: so these thinke, if they can blowe out any good wordes, and be able to cry, the Gospell, the Gospell, the preachers, the preachers, and to say vnto Christ, Thou hast prophesied in our streets, and we haue eaten in thy presence, they are right good christians, But the Lord shall say vnto them, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I know you not. Yet let vs bee warned by the examples of the godly, the exhortations of the Scripture, and the motions of God his spirite in our hearts, that seeing Christ is our wisdom, let vs walke in wisdom, or else we dwell not in Christ: seeing Christ is our light, let vs shine forth in holy conuersatiō, & seeing the world is our enemie, which dayly lyeth in wait to discredit our profession, let vs adorne the Gospell we profess, eyther make the tree good, and the fruit good, or the tree euill and the fruit euill, cast away this counterfeit holynesse, which is double iniquitie, let vs confesse with the mouth vnto saluation, belieue in the heart to iustification, and practise in life vnto sanctification, and let euery one that calleth on the name of the Lorde, depart from iniquity. Thus much for the Daughters aunswere. Nowe to the mothers reply in the nexte verse.

But Naomi] In this verse and in the two next following, Naomi confirmeth her counsell by forcible reasons, taken from their second marriages, and studying more for their good than her owne. The first reason is, that shee hath no moe sonnes eyther borne or vnborne, to be their husbandes: for by the lawe one brother being dead without issue, the next was to marry his wife, and to raise vp seede to his brother. They knewe shee had no moe children already borne, and shee proueth that shee is out of hope to haue any mo, by her owne

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age, shee is too old to marrie: & therefore to beare children, so that the force of this reason is to perswade them to goe back again, that they might marry at home, for she knew not how to bestowe them in her owne Country. In the which words, thus taking a reason from their marriage, she noteth the dutie of younger widdowes and women, which is to marry and to beare more children, and in her selfe perswading them vnto it, she noteth the dutie of godly parents, which is to deale priuately with them for their publique commoditie. For the apostle Paul willethe thy selfe same thing, that thy younger widdowes marry and bring forth more children, as the most acceptable condition for their fruitfull daies, and a necessary duty for replenishing the church. But these persons muste not so marrie for wantonnes, as if they minded nothing but procreation of children, but they must ioyne with itall Christian obedience to the aduise of their husbands: Secondly they must be carefull to bring vp their children in the feare and nurture of the Lord: Thirdly, this must bee the ende of their marriage and childbirth, that they may the more deuoutly giue themselues to the worshippe of God, and by their children to increase the number of the faithfull. For it is better to be barren then to bring forth children of the deuil, which they do that minde nothing lesse then their carefull education, and christian instruction; yea, it is more excellent to bee a religious widdow then a prophane married wife. But some will say that second mariages are not lawfull at all, because Paul willethe that such widdowes should not bee chosen into the number of church seruantes: and the holy ghost giueth such commendation of Anna because shee neuer married, though she were left a widdow very young: moreouer, the counsell of Paule, is that if they bee loosed from husbands or wiues, they should not seeke to be ioyned vnto them. Vnto all which I aunswere with the same Paul, That a woman so soone as shee is loosed from her husband, or so soone as her husband is dead, shee is at libertie to marry with whome shee will, onely in the Lord. Anna is commended more for her religion then her chastity

1. Tim. 3

14:

1. Tim. 5. 9.

Luk. 2. 36.

1. Cor. 7. 27

Rom. 7. 2.

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chastitie, And Paul his counsell is to them that could for beare in those daies of persecution. But to come to Naomi, she saith she is to old to marry, therefore it seemeth, though second mariages bee good for young women, yet they are not lawfull for the old. To this I answere, her meaning is not that it is simplie vnlawfull for her to marry, but that it should not profit her in regard of child bearing: men desire young and fruitfull women, not old and barren, & her purpose is to perswade her daughters, that shee neither had, nor coulde haue anye more children for them, therefore in the next verse she addeth, *If I hoped, or if I were this night with an husband*: But in my iudgment, I see no reasonable cause why olde women (especially) should marry, howsoeuer others may be contrary minded: my reasons are these: First, I reade it not practised by any body in the scripture, I meane such old women as in their owne consciences are perswaded they are past child bearing. Secondly, they breake the greatest consideration in marriage: they vndertake it for lust and not for children, for marriage was not ordained for the lust of the mind, but the necessitie of the body, to withdrawe it from sinne. Now their withered bodies cannot accomplishe the desire of their carnall mindes. Thirdly, it bringeth great inconuenience wyth it: if they marry with a young man there is no equality, as none shall be proued, if with old men like themselves, what comfort can they minister vnto them. Lastly, such mariages are more for wealth then woman or necessitie. Yet this is but my poore iudgement, if any doubt of it let them examine my reasons, if they bee waightie, let them receiue them, if light, amend them. If any say they marry for comfort, as they can say nothing els, I demaund why poore women haue not this comfort as well as the rich. I see seldome any poore widower married, but the wealthy as soone as eyther honestie or modesty will suffer them: Againe, comfort is no sufficient cause for marriage, because it may be had without marriage, but children cannot. It is the duerie of married folks with their mutuall loue to comfort one another,

New test.

but not a cause that ought to constraîne to mariage. The Eunuch wanteth comfort, yet who thinketh such a person fit for marriage: a continent person, which as Christ sayth hath made himselfe chaste for the kingdome of God wanteth comfort, yet he should sinne grievously if he married for comfort: let lawfull things be ioyned with expedient, and I thinke olde women will neuee marrie.

Yea if I had. This is the second reason wherewith shee perswadeth her daughters to turne backe againe, namely, graunt she had sonnes new borne, yet it were too long for them to tarry till they were growen vp and fit for marriage, yea, then they would bee past children, also they should lose the season of theyr youth, and so should reap no haruest of theyr daies: there would bee no agreement in yeeres betweene them, when they should be as a withered stubbe, and the young men as greene oliues. Where we note, that by the iudgement of this godly Naomi, there must bee an agreement in yeeres betweene the parties that shal be married, for she saith, would ye be deferred for them, from taking any husbundes? nay my daughters: by the which wordes she signifieth that it would be no fit marriage that one should be so old and the other so young. The Lorde created Adam and Heuah in one day, not only that marriage should not bee deferred too long, but also because their age should bee alike, but if any be the elder, let it bee the man. In the planting of gardens, they get the youngest impes, for the continuance and equalitie of the fruite: they will not digge vp an olde tree, and plant him in an orchard of tender impes; euen so must it be in marriage, for the matrimony of old men and young women, is like Iosephes purple coloured coate, which caused ieaousie in his brethren: for, as that was a signe of loue in his father, so this is a token of fondnes in a husband. But most vnsensibly is the marriage of young men and old women, which a godly preacher in our daies cōpared to the grafting of a young head vpon an old payre of shoulders: & I may compare it to the mixture of oyle and water, the which are quite against the nature of all medicines. And euen the brute beastes and the birdes, as wee reade
of

of the turtles, the harts, & the Elephants, condemn here in the folly of mankinde, which from their youth choose their mate, and being dead refuse another, fearing inequality of age and nature. Both these kind of matches are neither begun in the Lord, continued in nature, or satisfie the desire of both parties, but breake out into impatient ieaiousie or filthy adulterie, thinking euery daie a yeere till the eldest partie be dead. Oh vnseemely and vnfriendly behauiour towards those to whom they haue bound themselues to loue and liue together, being the onely cause of the breach of fidelitie, cursed discord, small enuie, and euerlasting misery.

Gen. 24. 7.

Exo. 2. 21.

Secondly by this we note, that it is the dutie of parents in time to prouide for their children, if they be willing to it, some godly and fit marriage. So did Abraham for Isaac his sonne, so did Isaac and Rebecca for Jacob their sonne, so did Iethro for his daughter Zipporah. The neglect of this dutie in parents, is the cause that so many children match contrary to their mindes, euen to their owne vndoing. And then they crye out towne and countrie, My sonne or my daughter hath married against my minde, when as themselues are in the onely faulte, then they punish them by keeping away their portions: so, as before by their negligence they sought their dishonestie, now by their wilfulness they bring them to perpetual beggerie. I defend not the rash and headlong marriages against parents consents, especially where godly parents are, and surely I fear there are but few in England that euer married so, but they procured the curse on themselues, and haue often (although too late) repented their wilfull & vngodly marriage. But yet beloued; be warned, if you desire the discharge of your own consciences, or the safeguard of your children, deale like parents with the, & they will performe like children to you: the Lord punisheth your negligence with their disobedience: you sinne first, and they followed your steps, forgiue them their offence, and receiue them to fauour againe, and the Lorde will likewise pardon your transgression, and blesse your posteritie with more dutifull obedience to you.

But this. Now when she had perswaded her daughters

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to returne, least they shoulde thinke shee careth not for them, & was willing to be rid of their companie, as those that were troublesome and burdenous vnto her, she addeth this clause in the end of this verse: Wherin she testifieth her care for them, and her patience in the Lord. Her care for them when she saith, It grieueth me much more for your sake than for mine owne: the death of my husband & losse of my children grieue me, but not so much as this, that now either I must depart from you, or else with your company indanger of your safetie. I could not but sorrow for the dead, yet I am more grieved for you poore destitute widowers: I haue lost their companie for a while, til I meet them againe in God his kingdome, but now we depart, I to the Lords people, & you to Infidels, and wee shall bee separated for euer. Would God that I coulde so promise you prosperitie with me, that so you might receiue the peace of your soules. Thus & such like she vttereth in these words for her owne excuse & their comfort.

Where wee are first giuen to vnderstand, how hardly true friendship is separated, yea though some parties are indangered thereby. Naomi would haue her daughters departe, they weepe at it and she is sorrowfull: insomuch as either partie striueth who shall receiue the worst. The mother counselleth her good, and the daughters promise hers: she would haue them returne and liue at rest in the armes of some louing husbands, but they had rather trauell than she should go alone. And this telleth vs that true friendship is not to receiue good of other, but to doo good vnto other. Choose thy friend, that when he is in heauinesse thou maiest comfort him, when he is hungrie thou mayest feed him, when hee is cast downe, thou mayest raise him vp: and finally, when hee wanteth make thou a supplie. This is godly friendship, like Ionathans and Dauids. Ifanie choose friendes for other respects, their friendship is carnall, and not spirituall, momentanie, and not ouerlasting, like the standing pooles which drie vp in summer, not like the running streames which indure continually.

Secondly,

Secondly, by this we note that one misery commeth not alone, for warres cause death, dearth, enuie, and robberies, sickness bringeth paine to the parties, and sorrow to their friends: euen so death doth not onely bring sorrow for the dead, but griefe for the liuing, as Naomi saith, it grieueth mee much more for your sakes. There is none that die but some shall want them, many friendes comfortles, many children harbourles, many seruantes masterles, and many creditours moneylesse by the death of men. I will say nothing, that the godly may and ought to mourne for their friends that are dead, as Abraham for Sara, Iacob for Rahel, the Iebusites for Saul, Mary and Martha for Lazarus: and the Apostle willeth vs to mourne, but with this clause, not as men without hope. Therefore the vse of this doctrine is, with patient & brotherly loue to beare with the weaknes of thē which seem in our conceits to weepe more for their husbands and wiues, children and friends, then we thinke needfull. It is their weakenes, and what knowe we, if the like burthen were on our backs: that we should not be pressed downe vnder it like them? Let vs therefore consider with our selues least wee also bee tempted, and helpe them with brotherly kindnes, not increse it with daily murmurings: that which is to day their sinne, to morrowe may bee our wickednes.

But the hand. In those wordes shee gathereth patience for the remedy of her own griefe, & sheweth howsoeuer she is afflicted, yet she is not ignorant, that as the showers come from the cloudes, so her afflictions from the Lord: his hand that wrought her felicity, hath also brought her to misery, her ease is her patience, her weakenes is her sorrow, her comfort, that God with whom is mercy hath wounded her heart.

The hand of the Lord is taken in the scriptures many waies, but generally it signifieth the meanes whereby he accomplisheth his counsell, and is referred either to his mercy and fauour, as when it is said, the hand of the Lord was with Iohn Baptist, or els to his iudgements, punishment or chastisement, so the hand of the Lord was against

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against the Israelites when they had forsaken him and served Baalim. So when the Arke of God was in the house of Dagon the god or idoll of the Philistines, the Lord ouerthrewe their God, cut of his hands and head and smote the Priests with Emerods, then they confessed the hand of God to be fore against them: so in this place it is taken for his chastisement or correctiō vpon Naomi. Out of the which we note many profitable doctrines.

Iud. 2. 15

1. Sam. 3. 7

First, that all our afflictions come from the Lord, that he might chastise his owne and confounde the vngodlie. Read but the 34. & 36. Chapter of Iob; most excellently intreating of this matter, wherein is shewed that neither the godly escape, nor the wicked goe scot free. This is the confession of Moses, to terrifie the Israelites, of Joshua to keep them in obedience. and of Dauid a man more exercised in trouble then all the world beside. This must we accompt with our selues in all our miseries, we are robbed by theeues, spoiled by murderers, stroke by brute beastes, reproched by slanderers, euill intreated by the worlde, hurte by our enemies, sustaine the losse of our goodes, the danger of our health, and are oppressed with sicknesse: surely in all these things say, The Lord gaue, and the Lorde hath taken away, euen as it hath pleased the Lorde; so commeth thinges to passe. But men will say, wee know it well enough already, and we confesse it. And doe you knowe and confesse, and will you not practise? A man being sicke, at the beginning neuer thinketh on the Lorde, but posseth to the Physition for counsell, without crauing the forgiuenesse of his sinnes, the cause of his sicknesse: yet you say, God hath sent it and layde it vpon vs, as if the Lord sendeth sicknesse to help the Physition to money; for with him you agree for his paynes and cunning, but with the Lord you agree not for your owne paynes which you endure. But you will say, we finde ease by medicines, & our sicknesse is abated; I answer, so the Lord suffreth witches and coniurers, to tell them that come vnto them, the things they desire, yet you will not say, they are guiltlesse. I speake nothing against the excellent and commendable profession of Physicke, but rather for the com-

Deu. 31. 1

Ios. 24. 20

Psal. 119.

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mendation of it, seeing God so accepteth it, as that thereby he seemeth to salue vp the sinnes of many, doing away their paines, and also to giue them longer time of repentance. But this I wish both in this & in all other miseries of mankind: that first we purge our consciences from notorious crimes, and then the Lorde will staye his hande from striking our hearts from wauering, our goods from wasting, our bodies from pining, and our soules from euerlasting dying.

Secondly by this we note, whence it commeth, that the godly are so patient in all their tribulations; euen fro this consideration, that the Lordes hand afflicteth them. This is worthy to be noted, in the example of Dauid, when Shemei cursed him, Abishai standing by, wisheth Dauid to punish him: but Dauid answereth him, what haue I to do with you yee sonne of Zeruiah? hee curseth, because the Lorde hath bidden him to curse me: as if he had saide, I may punish the Lord as wel as Shemei. The very like did Iob answer his wife, when she would haue him curse God and dye. Thou speakest like a foolish woman, what? shall we receiue good at the hands of God and not euill: as if he had said, wee are bounde to receiue euill at the hand of God, as well as good, & if we receiue the one with blessing, let vs not curse him for the other. This was it that made the Apostles to reioyce that they were accompted worthie to suffer for the name of Christ: and this must sincke into our ignoraunt and rebellious heartes, that we may learne at the first to humble our selues, least as we now suffer for sinne, so anone we be punished for impatience. The patient abiding of the righteous, auaieth much in the sight of the Lorde: men thinke they be forgotten, if thy bee a little afflicted, and cry out like desperate persons, Lord, Lord, but they neuer pray for patience, but all for deliuerance. Oh howe excellent is this example of Naomi, which being in many miseries in a strange countrey, hauing buried husbendes and sonnes; being now to departe from her acquaintance, to take a tedious journey into her owne countrey, poore, weary and desolate, yet all her wordes are these: The hand of the Lorde is gone out against

Sam. 16.

11. 12.

Job. 2. 10.

Lk. 4. 3.

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against me: as if she had said, he that gaue them tooke them, and hee that tooke them, left me patience. Thus must we stay our mindes on the worke of the Lorde, as the Arke was stayed by the Priestes in the middest of the riuier Iordan, which made the waters to flie backe, till all the children of Israel were passed thorow: euen so the the floudes of great troubles shall not ouerthrowe vs, if we stay our mindes on the hand of the Lorde, and safely escape the dangerous destruction of worldly affliction.

Ios. 3. 16.
17.

Then they list. Now cometh the effect of this comunica-
tion, wherein is shewed how sorrowfully these daughters
tooke it, & yet diuersly minded; for Horpha notwithstanding
her gentle proffers to her mother in law, her bitter
teares & pitiful lamenting, yet she taketh her leaue with
a sweet kisse, & returneth back to her idolatrous friends,
Naomi vsed no perswasions but worldly reasons, taken
from marriage, to perswade the both: shee seeth her sister
remain constant, and she that euen now, for the loue of
people & mother in law would goe as far as the farthest;
now for the cogitation of a heathen husband, forsaketh
both God, people, mother and sister. Who would haue
thought that Horpha which bid her friends farewell, her
countrey adieu, her kindred forsake, & idolatry abhorre,
would thus cowardly (as I may tearme it) flie backe a-
gaine in hope of a husband? But yet we see she doth, and
out of her example we may note many things.

First, that the world & carnal reasons are feareful hin-
drances vnto vs in Religion. We see this woman, how
doth she fall away from God, his people, all the Church
that she knew, her mother and sister? Wee knowe, how
many being sent for to the great Mans supper, which is
the Lorde, they excused their absence, one for his farme,
another for his oxen, another for his wife, as Horpah do-
eth for her husband: What shall I say? The loue of the
worlde is the hatred of God: and Iohn saith, Loue not
the worlde, nor the thinges of the worlde, for he that lo-
ueth the worlde, the loue of the Father is not in him.
And Christ saith, Whosoeuer commeth to mee and ha-
teth not father and mother, and wife and children, is not
worthie of mee. Where are now our naturallies, that
would be professors, but their friends will not let them,

Iam. 4. 4.
Ioh. 3. 15.

Luk. 19. 26.

they would bee Christians, but their wiues will not agree to them; this yeare they will be worldlings, and the next yeare when they haue ouercome their businesse, if they haue any leasure they will heare the word preached; Oh daungerous delays of subtile Sathan, studying by the worlde, to drawe men from God: they lye like slug-gardes; in winter it is too colde, in sommer it is too hotte to worke: so they in their youth, will be religious when they are olde, beeing in age when they be rich, being rich they waxe harder and harder, and so continue til the day of their damnation.

Secondly, by this we may gather howe farre an hypocrite or an infidell may goe in Religion. Hophah forsaketh her owne people, for the loue of God his people, she weepeth and cryeth, when it is but mentioned vnto her that shee woulde departe, shee trauaileth on the way towards the countrey of God his people; and in this her iourney, for a fewe worldly reasons, she turneth backe againe, though as it may seeme with a bitter heart. Euen so hypocrites may forsake the worlde and their friends, ioyne themselues to God and his people, trauaile and profite in Religion towards the heavenly Ierusalem, bee readie to weepe with them that weepe, and lament with them that lament: and in any good action, set his foote as farre forth as the best: yet, some occasion giuen, cyther for profite or pleasure, feare or daunger, sodainely turneth sayle, and commeth to the worlde againe. Euen so sayth our Sauour of the seede, that is sowne in the 2. and 3. ground, it taketh roote, it springeth, and groweth vp, but sodainely the heate of persecution ariseth, or offence taken at the doctrine, which is taught them, or the cares of this life & deceitfulness of riches choake them. By this we learne what to thinke of our softe hearted Christians, many among vs, that will diligently heare, and wring out teares from their moistened braine, at the hearing of God his iudgements thundered and threatned by the Preacher: yet, being gone, will make no conscience of oathes, carding, dicing, tabling, gaming for their neighbors mony, going abroad on the sabboth day to feasts, and beeing sharply reproofed

Mar. 4. 17.

18.

Ioh. 6. 66.

reprooued for it, then farewell Religion and profession also.

Thirdly, by this wee gather what exceeding kindnes an heathen, an Atheist or an infidell, may shew to them that feare God: Horpha for the loue of godly Naomi, goeth with her on the way, weepeth and kisseth at their departure, so great loue did shee beare to her mother in lawe, that had it not bene for one thing, shee had gone thorough with her to her owne people, So wee may see many among vs speake well of Religion, yet they will not go so farre as Bethlechem for it, that is, they will wish they had a preacher, yet they will hardly, either on the Sabbath day or weeke day, stirre one foote from their owne places, to heare a Sermon, so colde is their deuotion: but if they giue a poore man a meale of meate, or lend him a little money at his neede, or receiue a Preacher for a night, then he is the onely man in the Countrey. But oh Lord, open their eyes, that they may see their curtesie is but light, in regard of their dutie: if for their brethren they would die, it were but their dutie, howe little is it then, that they giue them meate? But they would know of vs what is the way to be saued; I answered, so would the young man in the Gospell, yet when Christ told him, he would not doe it, but went away sorrowing: euen so these men may outwardly and inwardly in some measure professe kindenesse and humilitie to bee instructed, but alas their profession is far fro true feeling of Christian religion.

Mat. 19. 23

Lastly, by this verse wee note that as Horpha and her companions are carnally minded, so Ruth and her fellowes are spiritually minded, though one be ouerthrowen with worldly reasons, yet the other remaineth inuincible in her first pretended purpose. So that heere is an image of a Congregation, where all heare, and yet there is a difference of hearing in one and the same Company: one parte with profite, another with disprofite, one to their health, another to their sickenesse, to some the saueur of life vnto life, to other, the saueur of death vnto death. Yet blessed be God, that hath no earth so barren, but it bringeth forth some fruite, no people so rude, but

Act. 17. 34.

there are some sanctified persons among them, which will not be drawne away till death: no battell so cruell, but some escape with life. If the Pharises will not beleue in Christ, yet the poore people that knowe not the lawe will receiue him for the Messiah. Among the mockers at Athens, Paul receiued some fruite of his labours, and the Gospell was neuer preached in any countrey, but it gained some. This teacheth vs to follow the example of Ruth and wee shall haue the rewarde of Ruth: sticke to the Lord, and to the faithfull, with purpose of heart; let not the vaine glittering pleasure, of pleasant pastime or profite, drawe vs from the hope of our euerlasting blessednesse. The time is but shORTE wee haue to spende, the labour easie if we willingly endure it, the profite euerlasting if we continue to the ende. This is the victorie that ouercometh the world, euen our Faith: for to him that beleueth are all thinges possible: Let vs therefore heare the word with diligence, that our faith may be strengthened, beleue with assurance; that our soules may be iustified, and stand fast in the triall of this world; that bodie and soule may be crowned: for blessed are they that endure to the ende. And thus much of this conference or communication, and the effecte thereof. Now let vs giue thanks to God for that which hath bene spoken.

1st Joh. 5. 4.

The thirde Lecture.

Ruth. cap. 1. Vers. 15. 16. 17.

15. And Naomi saide, beholde, thy sister in lawe is gone backe to her people and to her gods, returne thou after thy sister in lawe.

16. And Ruth answered, intreate me not to leaue thee, nor to depart from thee, for whether thou goest I will goe; and where thou dwellest I will dwell, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

17. Where thou dyest, will I die, and there will I be buried, the Lord do so vnto me and more also, if ought but death

do.

Leave

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depart thee and mee.



IN these wordes the holy ghost declareth vnto vs, the conference had betweene Naomi and Ruth after the departure of Horpah; wherein Naomi ceaseth not throughly to trie the examine the minde of Ruth, for what cause shee would goe with her; the wordes containe in them two partes. The first is the perswasion of Naomi in the 15. verse, to make Ruth to returne by the example of her sister. The second is the answer of Ruth, in the two next verses, consisting of two partes, the first is of the petition she maketh to her mother, in these words, *Intreate me not to leaue thee, &c.* which she amplyfieth by the resolution of her minde in the next wordes. First, that for her life shee would dwell with her, and goe with her. Secondly for her profession, *her people and God shoulde be Naomes.* Thirdly for her death, that she would die and be buried with her. The last part of this answer of Ruth, is the confirmation of it by an oth, in these wordes; *the Lorde doe so vnto me, and more also, if ought but death depart thee and me.*

Beholde thy sister is returned; Nowe Naomi goeth forward to deale wick Ruth onely, for the castle may seeme almost wonne, where one halfe of the souldiers are overcome, the ynicie betweene thesetwo sisters being broke, and Horpah being departed, what was poore Ruth able to doe alone? surely it is was a greater discouragement vnto her then any she had yet, namely; that her sister being departed, shee should lay before her her sisters example, to drawe her likewise to fall. And truely thus the Spirit of God dealeth most times, with those that labour to come vnto him, setting some in the way like the disciples which forebadde young children to come vnto Christ, and as the prease the people kept the poore man diseased of the palsy from comming vnto our Saviour: euen so many scandales, stumbling blockes, lettes, interruptions and hinderances come between the godly & Christ, as did betweene Naomi and Ruth.

But heere we, note that the examples of our kindred, and specially of those that seemed any thing in Religi-

Mar 10. 7

Mar. 3. 4.

on, are dangerous argumentes to drawe vs from Christ. Wee see in this place Naomi taketh not example of one vngodly sister to drawe away the other: which when our Saurour foresawe, he gaue this commaundement, that
 Mat. 10. 34. for his sake wee must forsake father and mother, bro-
 35. ther and sister, wife and children, or else we are not wor-
 Luk. 9. 69. thie of him. And in another place, one desiring of him but a little space to burie his father, he said vnto him, let the dead burie theyr dead. This is a very profitable doctrine for these daies, wherein men are thus discouraged from religion, for feare of their friends, for now Sathan stirreth vp one brother against another, to hinder them from hearing the sauing word of God, now they crie out against vs, Are you wiser then your forefathers? Hath not all thy friendes before thee beleueed on this wise? And wilt thou be singular? And surely beloued, we know it is the greatest argument, that popish atheists haue, they auncestours, fathers and mothers, their masters and mistresses, haue misliked this preaching, and these new doctrines, wherein many repose their greatest felicitie, and God send vs (saye they) to line no worse then they did, and to die no more blessed then they. But would you so rather be followers of your popish and ignoraunt predecessours, then of the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles reueiled in his worde? this is to builde your selues vpon another foundation, which when the fire commeth, will vtterly consume it. But they say, are all our predecessours damned which did as wee doe? to whome I may well answere. How doe you knowe that all your fathers were of your mindes? but wee are not in God his place, to iudge and araigne them: but say with the Apostle, the time of this ignoraunce did not God regard, but nowe he admonisheth all men euery where to repent: Because hee hath appointed a day to indge the world in righteousness. So that if God seeme not to regard it, why shoulde we stande vpon it? And seeing now the trumpet of the Gospell is sounded by the Lordes Ministers, let vs not with Mary lament ouer the graues of the dead: But leauing them at theyr rest, trudge and trauaile to the mount of the Lord, that of him

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we may freely receiue that which many kings & prophets could neuer obtain. Though Moses went not into y^e land of Canaan, yet he saw it; so it may be the Lord let our predecessors see light of y^e gospel, though they could not enjoy it. But as Peter & Iohn wer with Christ when he was trāfigured & saw his kingdō, yet could nor enioy the continual presence of his glory, but being warned of Christ, told it to no man: so many godly in time of darknes not onely saw but imbraced the truth, which it may be is for gotten of their graces posteritie. Let the parents eat the lowre grapes, shal the childrēs teeth be set an edge? if they made cakes to the host of heauē, shal we worship the sun & the moone? what diseredite is it to a blinde father that hath a son wel sighted? no more is it to idolaters, whose children are the appointed heires of the land of Canaan. Let vs abide with him that hath the words of eternal life; Mat. 17. 6.
& as the wealth of our parents is deare vnto vs, yet many thousand times more deare is the health of our soules. Secondly by this we note, that to sticke by our friends & to go with them from the Lord, is to commit idolatry: for Naomi saith, *Thy offer is gone to her people, & to her Gods: as* if she had said, indeed for kindreds sake she is gone back, but it is vnto idols & false gods. Yea & more also, vnto deuils, this is a worthy lesse for our naturals to learn, who wil forsake gospel, church, prayer & preaching, some for the loue of their wiues to keepe them company at home, when God calleth for thē in one cōgregation or other, some their idolatrous friends which are notable recusāts, yet because they should think wel of thē, they wil falsifie their faith to the Lord & be vniust in his work, that they may please thē with their present company: some are hindered by their profite, some by vnlawful gaming, and many by bare idleness. Thus men make gods, some of their people, some of their wiues, some of their popish friends, some of their profit, some of their pleasures, & some of their idleness, & few or none are to be found, that are both able & willing to follow Christ whē he calleth thē, as little Ioh. 6. 68.
Zacheus did, but euery one hath some excuse to keep thē from the lords supper, who shal neuer tast of his heauēly pleasures, seeing they mind earthly things, making theyr Luk. 19. 5. 6
glory

glory their shame, their bely their God, let their end be damnation. But oh my beloved, let vs be warned by the dangers of others, whē Peter rebuked christ & bid him fauor himself, christ rebuked him & called him sathan: euen so

Mar. 8. 23.

when our deereſt friends wold haue vs be slack in preaching, & fauor our bodies, come to the church ſeldom & make no toile of it, agree wth the moſt in religiō, or rather in worldlines, & ſo ſhal we haue fauor, aſpire to the greateſt promotions, for there is, greateſt profit, & ſnally take pleaſure in vnlawful things, let vs ſay, come behind vs ſathan. For it is not our friend, but our enemy ſathan, y^e thus alureth vs with the bait of pleaſure, eaſe, & profit, that we might hang on the hooke of perpetuall perdition. Then ſeing we haue eſpied his policy, diſcouered his deceit, & tried the diſcommodities that enſue his obedience, let vs innocent children once burned dread the fire, & as Iacob ſaid by his owne ſons Simeon & Levi, my ſoule come not into their habitation, ſo let vs ſay to our deereſt friends wth their counſel & a good conſcience cannot ſtand together better breake the league of frienſhip betweene vs, then ſuffer the ſhipwark of a precious & peaceable conſcience. The wiſeſt Salomon by hearkning to his wiues, diſobeyed the Lord, & it coſt him ten tribes of his kingdom: if ſuch

I. Kin. I 1. 2

green peeces be deſtroyed, what ſhal become of the rotten & ſeaſethenſore. If angels from heauē muſt not be heard, much leſſe devils from hel drawing vs away frō following the truth by the mouth of our deereſt & neareſt friends, though it were by our wiues that lye in our boſomes. Therefore let vs take vnto vs the whole armor of god that we may ſtand faſt in the day of battel: better neuer rū, except we obtaine the price, better neuer to haue knowne God or his Goſpel, then now to fall away frō him again.

But Ruth ſaid, intreat me not: This is the firſt part of the answer of Ruth, to the argumēt of her mother, & it is her petition with the reſon of it: wherein ſhe proteſteth that it is better vnto her, not to be intreated to depart, or once to haue it motioned, or mentioned to go frō her, for her reſolution is, that neither the troubles or trauailes of life could ſeperat her, neither the ſorrows of death or deſolation of the graue ſhould deprive her of Naomies company, for

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she saith, *Where thou diest well I dye, and there will I be buried.* Out of which I oblerue these things. First, how the godly behaue themselves in all tryalls and temptations, namely, that the very thoughts of departing from God & yielding to sin are very gal and bitternes vnto them, inso- much as they say with Ruth, intreat me not to leaue thee that is, neuer speake word to moue me from hearing God his word, to ouerthrow my faith, to turn me to disobedience, to perisli my conscience, to hinder my course, or to subuert my professiō. A notable example hereof is in *Elisha*, who was intreated by *Elijah* as here *Ruth* is by *Naomi*. First he bid him tarry at *Gilgal* till he went to *Bethel*; but *Elisha* said, as the Lord liueth, & as thy soule liueth, I will not leaue thee nor depart from thee. the they went to *Bethel* together, & bid him tary there, for the Lord sendeth him to *Iericho*: but *Elisha* answered, as γ Lord liueth & as thy soule liueth, I will not leaue thee nor depart from thee, then they went to *Iericho*; & *Elijah* bid him tary there till he went to *Iericho*, and *Elijah* bid him tary there till he went to meete the Lord at *Jordan*. *Elisha* answered as he did before for *Elijah* foresee, γ if hee went not with *Elijah*, he should haue no benefite by his seruice, so if we abide not γ obiections of our friends, γ reproches of our enemies, γ intisements of the world, & the persuations of our owne fathers and mothers that are against vs in religion, we shal lose al γ we haue done before, yea though they should say as *Rabsakeh* said to the men of *Ezechia*, The Lord hath sent vs to speake vnto you. But many will say, if profane worldlings shuld discourage vs in religiō & those γ are opē contemners shuld perswade vs from it, the we culd abide it, but it goeth nie vs whē our own wiues or husbands, fathers or mothers, brethrē & sisters, companions & acquaintance, shal try vs so narrowly. But mark dearly beloued, γ art not alone, *Ruth* was thus handled by *Naomi* her dear mother in law, for whose sake she had departed from kindred & cōtry, yet she trieth molesteth, & vexeth her, yet by γ sūing grace of God his assisting spirit in the end she acquiteth her self, like a womā of strength in the lords quarel: for the Lord for our farther trial doth not only proue vs in the lest, but in γ greatest afflictions.

The

2. King. 2. 3

2. 4 5. 6.

The Israelites cared but little for the Philistines, had they not had giants among them, so the Lord will bring crosses like armed men to dismay vs, that our valour & courage may be knowne, Iob had first one herd taken away & then another, in the end his children crushed to death, & then he was strangely visited in his own body, but hauing only one comfort in al the world left, his wife, she bid him curse God & die. But some say, we wold willingly be professors, but the preachers these helies, tel vs how we must be mortified, & they cal vs in their sermons wretches, & cursed creatures, these hard words hinder vs, if they spoke faire vnto vs & cried mercy, mercy, we wold with more diligence frequent their exercise. I answere, if they speake in Gods his name whose embassadours they are, cannot you beare it for his sake? they are not comon persons in that place, but supply Christs roome: now christ called his disciples a faithles generation, he called Peter sathan, & a poore woman he called dog, whē she came vnto him. How did he deale with king Herod, & with the Pharisees, enery man knoweth, and are you better then these? Paul called the Galathians foolish, was it not to make them wise, that therby he might draw them to the truth, they had forsaken? euen so the ministers of Christ must handle this rough world, setting it out by the titles, y by the name they may geffe of the nature. If the sick man promise peace to his soule in y multitude of his possession, shal not y Lord cal him foole for his labor? if all the world follow the prince, y taigneth in the aire, shall not we say that they be without God, & so without saluation? Doth not the Lord chasten vs in this world y we shuld not be condēned in y world to come? Are not seruants cōtented to bear hard words at the hāds of their masters, because they receiue wages of them? euen so suffer God his ministers to speake y worst they can of you, yet I assure you, ther is no faithful preacher that will speake so basely of the notablest wicked person y is, but he speaketh & thinketh a thousand times more basely of himself. Beare with this therefore, you are children & infants for in religion, not able to speak, they speake you to the Lord in as humble manner as may be knowing that the Lord resisteth the proud & giueth grace to the humble

2. Cor. 5. 20

Mar. 8. 23.

Mat. 15. 23.

24.

Luk. 12. 20.

1. Pet. 5. 5.

ble and meeke: the prodigal son by speaking most vilely of Luc. 16. 13. himselfe, purchased his fathers fauour: Euen so these hard 19. speeches of our selues, and other penitent sinners, are as faithfull messengers to reconcile vs vnto God: Secondly, by this we note, how wee must be inabled to encounter or resist the examples of others, that are laid against vs to draw vs frō God: euen as Ruth doth in this place. Naomi telleth her, Hophra is turned away, and therefore shee must also. Ruth answereth, *Where thou dwellest I will dwell*: as if shee had said; if thou turne backe, I will turne backe also, but I know thy constancy is such as thou wilt neuer yeld, therefore all the examples of my slippery sister, and fearefull fallawaies in y world shal neuer moue me; it is thy constancy that I looke vpon & nothing els, which is as a safe ship for me to saile in through the waues of my vnstedfast minde: so that by this you perceiue, how she opposeth the stedfastnes of her mother, against the backsliding of her sister, depending vpon the surest hold, not vpon a broken staffe. Euen so must we against the examples of vngodly ruffians set the examples of sober minded. Match the world and Christ together, what shal the world get, If it say, be ignorant, the other saith if the gospel be hid it is to them that be lost: if it say folow the ways of thy own hart, the other saith for this thou shalt come to iudgment: if the world say bee couetous & enrich thy self by gaming, cosning, carding, dising, buying & seling, the other saith, such shal not inherie God his kingdome: if the world say, seeke honor, the church saith, it is vanity: if it say, esteeme best of thy selfe, the other saith, thinke better of a nother: if it wish thee prosperity, the church saith, rather suffer aduersity with God his children, then to enioy the pleasures of sin for a season. So the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: if thou be tempted to infidelity, remember Abraham that beleeue in hope; vnder hope, and beyond hope: if to incontinency, remember Ioseph the mirror of chastitie: if to impatiency, thinke vpon Iob, if to vniust dealing, remember Iacob: if to idlenes, think on the pismire: if to drunkennesse, remember what Dauid did with the water of the well of Bethleem. This is vsual in the scripture to exhort by examples, Peter wisheth godly women to looke vpon Sara her o. 1. Pet. 3. 6. bedience, James willeth the poore in his daies to take the lam. 5. 10. pro-

2. Cor. 8. 23

4.

Mat. 25. 1

12.

prophets for an example of patiēce. Paul exhorteth the Corinthians to liberality, by the example of the Macedonians euen so on the contrary, threatnings are denounced by the example of others, as we may often read in the Gospel. The Lord saith, the Queene of Sheba shall rise in iudgment against the nation of the Iews which came to heare the wisdom of Salomon, likewise he prouoketh them by the example of the publicans & harlots, telling them, they shall be preferred in the kingdome of God, & thinke there is none so simple but they know they ought rather to followe the wise than the foolish virgins. But some will say, now the world is altogether corrupted, & the most part is the worst part, therefore they must needs follow their manners and be defiled. To whom I answer, if thou were in a litle bark vpon the greatest sea, & sawest a thousand mightie waues about thee, like huge mountaines, woldest thou forsake thy litle barke which is alone, & leap into the middest among the waues, because they are many? so thou shouldest worke thy own destruction: euen so, wilt thou forsake the maners, life, & company of a few godly persons, with whom is safety, to wallow in the millions of worldly men with whom is no peace, but is like the raging sea & cannot rest? shalt not thou be tossed with them, I will not say troubled, but euerlastingly confounded? I grant we should liue by precept & not by example, but seeing we must needs see the Gospell, before we beleue it, let vs looke on the liues of the purest & fewest among vs, & ioine our selues to them, as Noah to his arke, that the water floods of euerlasting destruction ouerwhelme vs not in eternall damnation.

Thy God By these words it may seeme that Ruth is not so wel grounded in the knowledge of God as she ought to be in that she dependeth vpon her mother, in saying, thy God is my God, as if she had said: if thou worship the true God, so wil I, if thou be an idolater, so wil I, if thou turne backward, so wil I, if thou go forward, so wil I. But I take it farther otherwise, that these words proceed frō a hart fully grounded vpon the truth: as if she had said, I know Naomi, thou wilt neuer worship any Gods but the true God, thou art constant in that which thy selfe hast taught me, I remaine stedfast in that which I learned of thee, and therefore I can neuer forsake thee, The which interpretation is confirmed

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ed by the words that follow, *Thy people my people*: who were Naomies people but the Iewes which alwaies worshipped the true God so that if Naomi could change her birth, parentage, people, & country, then also in y^e minde of Ruth she could change her God, & as she was persuaded, she knew her people, so she knew her God, & as she thought, she could not change her people, so she cōcēued she would neuer alter her worship: so y^e these words proceed of a stedfast perswasion in the knowledge of God, & an assured hope of her mothers continuance. Euen as wheⁿ the king of Babel calleth the almighty by the name of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego, was persuaded he was y^e tru God, by the miraculous deliury of those his seruāts frō y^e fry furnace. And as the king of Media called him by the nāe of Daniels god, because he had deliuered him frō the hūgry lions. euen so Ruth called the true God by the name of Naomies god, because she was instructed by her. But some wil say, is it not lawful for vs to depēd vpon our fathers or elder friēds in religion or to belecue as the church or as catholique men belecue? I answer, if the question be made of the necessary points to saluation, as the knowledge of the trinity, the work of our redemption with such like, it is by no means lawfull for vs to depend vpon men, though they be the chiefeſt in knowledge, and the greatest in authority in al the world, if they teach it neuer so truly, yet we must haue recourse to the word of God. For Paul wished the Corinthians y^e they shold be followers of him as he was of God; as if he had said, where I agree wth God & his word, consent with me, wher I disagree, dissent from me. we know what commendation the lord gineth the Iewes of Berea, wth sought the scriptures dayly, whither those things were so or not, which were taught by Paul and Silas: we know how Paul withstood Peter to his face, who was a pillar of the church & a more ancient Apostle then himselfe, yet he was faultie: and to conclude, we must receiue the gospell as from God the onely author of it, not from man, least we make the preaching of the crosse of none effect: it is far surer to send vs to the fountaines of the written word of God, then to the braines of the best lerned in the world. Therefore the conclusion is, that we must not in the foundation of religion depend

Dan. 3. 29.

Dan. 6. 26.

1. Cor. 4. 16

Act. 17. 11.

Gal. 2. 11.

depend vpon men or angels, though we were neuer so truly taught by them, but must referre our faith, and the credit therof, to the onely written word of god. But some will say, had Ruth this word of God, or did Naomi carry it wth her into the land of Moab? I answer that it is very likely they had, for the Iewes at this day haue the old testament with them in al nations: secondly, if they had not, yet the Lord by his spirit did perswade the heart of Ruth of the truth of these things which Naomi had taught her, so did he perswade his church when ther was no word written, for the space of aboue two thousand yeres: so doth he this day keepe his church among infidells, where is neither preaching, word nor sacraments, yet not one of the is lost. But if any say, let vs then forsake the written word of God and attend to these reuelations or priuate instructions of the holy ghost, I answer, so the Iewes when they came into the land of Canaan, might haue eate no meate till the Lord rained down more manna vpon them: surely then they had all starued many thousand yeeres ago: euen so if we look for such extraordinary illuminations, & forsake y^e present food of our souls, God his writtē word preached among vs, the other being ceased, we shal iustly be cōdemned as the murderers & slaughter slaues of our own destruction. Let vs therefore take heede to God, not to men; ground our faith vpon his word, not on human gifts, attend to the voice of christ speaking by his ministers to the ears of y^e body, not waiting for extraordinary illumination if we want this means, labor for it as a pearle worth al our marchants substance, yea a treasure greater then all the world. But of lighter points of religion, if we receiue any thing of men who in one point haue diuers iudgments, let vs learn to examine the reasons of al, & being proued by prayer & peace of conscience leane to the best: neither doubting to depend vpon men or the credit of the truth, but to the word. Where we note many things, what great care ought parēts, magistrats, ministers & prechers, to haue ouer their children people & subiects, for theyr instruction: seing as Ruth had truly lerned of their mother in law that did she constantly defend, namely the worship of the onely one God. If Naomi had peruerterd her frō one heathenisme to another, it is very likely she wold haue abode by it
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but being instructed in the truth, and sealed by the holy spirite of promise, shee doth carefully maintaine it, giuing vs thereby to vnderstand how inestimable is Eph. 1. 13, the benefite of good education, and first training vp in religion. And ought not this to be decreed vnto vs, that watch ouer the soules of our people and children, who by vs beeing rightlie grounded in the foundation of christian religion, may happely growe vp, like to glorious oliues for the church and common wealth. Wee read when Laban swore by his false gods, then Iacob swore by the feare of his father Izaac; so excellent was Gen. 31. 35 the instruction giuen him of his father, that in the presence of idolatrous Laban, for feare nor fauour would he alter his religion: yea it seemed to be fastened in his flesh, that hauing bene twentie yeeres among the idolatrous Sirians, yet he had not changed the manner of his oth, the which he lerned of his father. Oh where are these Isaaks in our daies, which teach their children any religion? indeed men are too careful for their childrens temporall wealth, they put them to schooles and vniuersities, to be students at the law, and men of occupations, (which are good) but ask them why they do so; they will answere, that they might haue something to liue by hereafter: neuer a worde I warrant you of the saluation of their soules, but for that, they will hope in God they say: and thus they compasse sea and land for trifles, but the neuer fading health they least thinke vpon. In times past seruants prayed to the God of their maisters, but in these daies if they should doe so, they Gen. 24. 42. must praye eyther to pride, couetousnes, or ignorance: maisters and seruants can swear by the name of God liberally, but pray sparingly, insomuch as if the life of God consisteth in their prayers, they would surely murder him, they so seldome call vpon him. Oh that this hellish behaviour of maisters and seruantes, could be reduced to the line of God his worde; but now they deale with their seruants as the Egyptians did with the Israelits, they look for their tasks and worldly busines, but they neuer exhorde them to sacrifice to the Lord: nay, they hinder them, and call them idle personnes, if
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there

there be any forwardnes of seruants and children that waies; truly nowe is like seruant, like maister; like maide, like mistresse, like father like sonne, like mother like daughter, such is the seede such is the harvest, they go from cradles to graues, and from graues to dānation, their whole care is for pleasure and wealth, and therefore they haue no part or portion but in this present life. Yet let the children of Abraham do like Abraham, teach their sons, daughters & seruants, the couenāt of the Lord, that all their seed & posterity may be blessed, both with the temporal & euerlasting promise, for godlines hath the promise of this life and of the life to come. Secondly by this we note, the fall of vngodly flatterers which wil outwardly for shew or fauer be godly with the good, & wicked with the profane, they wil in good company temper their speech like good mē, they wil trudge & trauel to sermons and godly exercises, because it pleased some gentlemā or other, & wil say to the, thy God my God, your preacher my preacher, your professiō shalbe my profession, whom you loue I loue, whō you hate I abhor: Of this sort are many ignorant persons, one misliketh our religiō because some popish friend of his mislike it, some speaks against our gouernment, because one or other which gape for the church liuings speaketh against it: and to say the truth, it is very lamentable to see, how all religion of many is turned into man pleasing, but these tame beasts will one day come to the slaughter as wel as wilde, when it shal be manifested, that the surest & safest way in religion, is to depend on God and not men.

Where thou dyest. Hauing promised her life to bee spent in her mothers company, shee proceedeth to her death, shewing vnto her such perfect friendship as neyther the trauailes of life or sorrows of death, could euer abrogate, and she addeth, that euen in that place wher Naomi should be buried would Ruth be interred: for we know the ancient custome was to bee buried with the fathers or predeceffours, whereof vndoubtedly the cause was, the hope of the resurrectiō, that as they were buried, so they shuld rise together, to be made partakers of

Gen. 18. 19

1. Tim. 4. 8.

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of eternal woes, or euermlasting ioies. And by this we obserue the loue which we owe vnto our fathers & frēds, must be of such continuance, y it reach vnto the graue: not onely to be here the inheritors of their lands, but also being dead, to giue our bodies to their sepulchers, & the measure of it must be so perfect, that me must be the companions of life and death. And truely such as is the loue of children to their natural parents, such must be the peoples to their spiritual fathers in christ. The Galatians to please Paul wold haue pulled out their own eies, but men in these daies are so far frō this liberalitie, towards the final number of preaching ministers, that 1. Cor. 3. 15 they will hardly giue any penny towards their mainte- Ga. 4. 14. 15 nance: they had rather haue their gold then the Gospel of Christ, their paltry pigs then preaching: They cry out chargeable, chargeable is the ministry, when they themselves which should pay the tenths, yeld not the twentieth of their increase, such suing for their right, such tri- ing of customes, such ouerbearing the weak, & finally they would be religious, but the ministers must be as beggers amōg thē. Who seeth not in many places wher they cry out for preachers, and promise largely in their behalfe, yet when the Lord hath sent them, they almost stinke in their presence. I speak plainly I confesse, & yet but the truth: & moreouer, they are not onely poorly provided for, but euery base person, peasant, & pot cō- panion, are suffered to crow ouer thē & cry out against thē. Thus christ was before, & yet like vs, contemned of the brauest & reuiled of the basest: the world, / see is no changling, although many hundred ages haue passed since, yet the maners thereof remaine, it agreeth in no- thing saue onely to persecute Christ: and seeing we are sent forth as silly lambs among ten thousand wolues, and as men born out of due time, although our calling be despised, our labor vnprofitable, & we made laugh- ing stocks, yet our paines wil be rewarded, our offences pardoned, we crowned, & they euermlastingly confound- ed. So let God. Last of all, that shee might be no more molested by her mother in law, she confirmeth the reso- lutiō of her mind by an oth, in these words. So let God

doe vnto me, and more also if ought but death do separate thee and mee : which is an vsuall manner of swearing in the scripture, as we reade of Dauid how he swore he woulde bee reuenged of the churlish Nabal, for the vncourteous message he returned him by his seruants, and is vsed by all the godly in the olde Testament, and indeede it doth most notably describe the nature of an othe, for it is thus much in effect, I pray God confound mee if I speake not this with purpose of hearte : out of the which wee note many thinges most profitable. First that in euery oath wee curse our owne soules, if we publishe not the truth, or performe not that which we promise: as if euerie time we sweare wee shoulde say, The Lord confound mee bodie and soule with Sathan and his angelles, if this bee not so. Oh that our othe mongers & common swearers in our daies, wold remember or vnderstand this, that whereas in their daies they haue sworne many milions of times, so many curses & damnations, they haue wished to themselues, the very consideration wherof wold make them as guiltie in their own consciences as euer Cain was for killing a man, or Iudas for betraying the Lord of glory: they haue with their arrowes of blasphemie shotte thorough & boared the Lord to the very neereest place of his life, for euerie trifle. And truly as the common Inne is knowne by his signe, and the blacke Moore by his skin, euen so is an atheist and carnal man by his othe. We shal talke with honest worldly men, who at euerie worde or sentence, will breake forth into most horrible swearing vppon no occasion, if they be rebuked they waxe much worse. We reade of an Egyptian Israelite that blasphemed, and was by God his owne commaundement stoned to death. Now if this law were put in practise among vs? where woulde the gallant companions, which will swear by all the colours of the moone, become? would not they crie out to the hills to couer them, and to the rocks to fall vpon them? was it not strange, that among fixe hundred thousand men which were able to beare armes, with olde men women and children almost innumerable there shuld be found but one man that had blasphem-

1. Sam. 25.
22.

Leui, 24. 23

Num. 1. 46.

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blasphemed, or taken God his dreadfull name in vaine and he must be stoned? But among vs, if so many chosen men were taken, my life for it, there shall not be found among euery hundred ten persons which are not common blasphemers. Oh Lord, how doth thy mercy stay the heauens from powring downe stones vppon vs; as they did vppon the Cananits. There is not now a child in the streets, if he be able to speake, but he murmureth an oth, onely excepted some few which haue godly parents: there is not a woman eyther maide or wife, some few excepted, which doth not dayly increase their curse by their continuall blasphemies: may we not now say? Lord what is man that thou visitest him, or the sonne of man, that thou so regardest him. Truly the most folow the counsell of Iobs wife, they curse God and dye, a godly man required to curse Christ and hee shoulde liue, answared, seuentie yeares haue I serued him and yet he neuer did mee any hurt, why then should I curse him. And I pray you what hurt hath the Lords done vnto you, that you thus blasphem his honour, curse your owne soules, rebell against his lawes and sweare many hundred times oftener then you eate or drinke: surely the disease of leprosie was contagious, and whosoeuer had it was excluded from the congregation, how much more ouerlit this poyson of swearing and swearers, to be cut off from the societie of God and men? And surely now helpe O ye Gods of the earth, I meane you Magistrates and men of authority, this knot will neuer be vnloosed except you draw out your swords and strike it a sunders though you would giue them all your possessions, and steale away their swearing as Rahel stole her fathers idols, yet they will sweare by false Gods still as Laban did; that is, they must either die, or the wrath of God must be powred downe vppon vs for euer, for his curse shall neuer departe from the house of the swearer. And if you helpe not to cure this euill, the Lorde shall curse both you and them with euerlasting plagues. Hee cryeth and saith, whome shall I send? the ministers haue said they wil go, yea, they haue told Iacob his sinne and Israel his transgression, and England his swearing also,

Iud. 10. 17

Esay. 9. 3

but they are come again with Ieremie, vnto you O princes, publish you the decree, that whosoener sweareth by the name of God rashly, hee should be cut off from the people, and his house sowed with salt, neuer to be builded againe. Secondly, by this we obserue, that it is not lawfull to sweare but only by the name of God, for Ruth saith so, *And so let God doe vnto me, and more also* She calleth not heauen and earth to record, or any other thing, save only he which is able to punish or els to pardon, & knoweth the secrets of every mans hart, Wherby we are taught, that it is sacriledge in God his sight to sweare by our faith and troth, our honour or honestie, breade or drinke, or any thing else. Many thinke they auoide swearing very cleanly, if they sweare by any of these, not knowing that he that sweareth by the gold, sweareth by the temple, & he that sweareth by the temple, sweareth by him that sitteth thereon: euen so he that sweareth by his faith, sweareth by Christ (for faith is no faith without Christ) & he that sweareth by the sonne, sweareth by the father and the holy Ghost. Therefore dearly beloued, let vs frame our tongs to honour, not to dishonour God, to glorifie, not to defame his name. For if he that toucheth his Saintes, toucheth the apple of his eye, what doth he which thrusterh at his name, which is dearer vnto him than heauen and earth? Surely the Lord will not holde him guiltlesse, but as hee hath not pittied the Lorde in tearing him with oathes, no more shall the Lord shew any mercy to his soule from punishing it in hell.

Lastly, by these wordes of Ruth wee obserue, that an oath must be the last thing wee produce in the testimonie of any truth. Shee denieth her mother once, and the second time, when her sister went away, but nowe the third time, after solemne protestation made, she addeth an oath, as the last refuge and end of all controuersie. Against this do all the former offend, which will not tary till the last, but euen at the first rap out their oathes, as fast as a brauling dog his barking, swearing through custome to truth and falsehood, making no difference betwene waightie matters and idle toies, especially in gaming, playing, hunting, chiding, and such like, they spit

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out their poison against God himself, neither sparing the wounds, blood, hart, death, and nailes of the Lord, retaining him worse being in heauen, than the Jewes did vpon the crosse. But let Ruth and her companions teach ten thousand of them, with what reuerence they must vse the holy name of God: she had not bin past ten yeeres with a godly woman, but she had learned her religion both of faith & manners, for in this she vttereth both: but we haue a great many both men & women, which haue had twentie & thirty a peece, not with one, but with a whole church of godly persons, & yet they haue got neither faith nor maners from them, they can easily giue them leaue to practise religion, but themselves wallowe in pleasure. But bee not deceiued, God is not mocked, when he beginneth he will make an end, and consume your viperous tongues and beastly hearts, as the fountain of this mischiefe in the fire of hel. We are as importunat on you as the blind men of Iericho, the more we are rebuked, the more we cry vnto you, let not our country be cursed, our prince remoued, our God blasphemed, his Gospel translated from vs, & our souls & bodies euerlastingly plagued. *To God let vs giue praise*

The fourth Lecture.

Ruth. I. Verse. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22.

18 *When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking vnto her.*

19 *So they went forth both vntil they came to Bethleem, & when they came to Bethleem, it was noised of them throughout all the city, and they said, Is not this Naomi?*

20 *And she answered, Call me not Naomi, but cal me Mara, for the almighty hath giuen me much bitterness.*

21 *I went out full, & the Lord hath caused me to returne empty, why call you me Naomi, seeing the Lorde hath humbled me, and the almighty hath brought mee vnto aduersitie.*

22 *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabiteffe, &c.*

HAuing heard y^e conference between Naomi & Ruth now the holy ghost describeth the issue of this iorney, to y^e end of this chapter: wherein Naomi ceaseth to

vex her daughter, or dissuade her to proceed in her purpose, But willingly taketh her with her, & both of the trauaile to Bethlehen, whether they come in a most fit and acceptabable time, neither hindred in their iourney, nor forgotten of their friends, but kindly receiued to their great comfort.

Those words containe in them two partes, the first their consent to trauaile and iourney vnto Bethlehen, the second is their intertainment there. The first part is expressed in the eighteenth and nineteene verses: & hath two members, first Naomi rested satisfied with the answer of Ruth & vexed her no more, verse eighteenth, secondly their prosperous iourney to the city Bethlehen verse nineteene: In the end of this verse is set downe the entertainment they found there, which is this, the citizens came flocking to see her, calling & welcomming her by name in these words, *Is not this Naomi?* vnto the which salutation she her selfe answereth in the two next verses, first acknowledging her name, but confessing her selfe vnworthy of it, in these wordes, *Call mee not Naomi, But call me Mara*: secondly she addeth the cause of her speeche, in these wordes, for the Lord hath giuen me much bitterness: this is amplified in the next verse by an allegory taken from a vessel. In these words *I went out full*: finally she setteth downe the vse she maketh of her affliction, shewing vnto them, that she could not glory in all the vaine titles of the world, first because the Lord had humbled her, secondly because he had brought her into aduersitie: in the last verse is set down the time when these pilgrims came from Moab to Bethlehen, which was the beginning of barley haruest.

When she saw. As Naomi in the beginning dealt very wisely, in the triall of her daughters before they were too farre gone, so in the ende shee dealeth very godly with Ruth, in that shee yeeldeth to her answer and petition, giuing ouer to molest her with any more obiections. This friendly and worthy meeknes, is very commendable in al the godly, for without this they can neuer in charity and compassion trye and examine thei brethren

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brethren. When our Sauour Christ, had dealt with the Cananitishe woman about the like cause, seeing that silence would not answer her, nor deniall satisfie her, Mat. 15. 23. nor the opprobrious word of dogge dismay hir, then he yelded to his desire, cured her daughter, and proclaymed her faith to be wonderfull: By which wee gather that it is an vngodly thing, to try any in religiō or in any good motiō beyond their strength, for it is no doubt but Naomi if shee would, could haue multiplied obiections against this enterprise of Ruth; but her mind was to try her, not to trouble her, to confirme her, not to confound her, and to shew vnto her what must bee her resolution, if she go vnto the Lords people, she can hope for no earthly felicitie, she must neuer repent and turne backe againe, shee must bury both countrey and kindred in the graue of forgetfulness, that the thoughts or desire of their fruition must neuer hinder the course of her religion. Whereby all the godly are by Naomi admonished, to be careful, whō they receiue into their company, and howe gently they must entreate them when they find their fidelitie: the rauen will not feede their owne birds or young ones so long as they be naked till their feathers come out, and they knowe them to be their owne, which iealousy of soules must teach vs, that if wee see not the euident tokens of godlynes, we must not receiue, yea our owne kinsman into the secreete of our hearts, to communicate vnto them the sweet fellowship we haue wth Christ, for many daily creepe into the church to espie our libertie, but as Iohn faith, if any come vnro you & bring not this doctrine, receiue them not to house, nor bid them good speede. But in this it is strange to see howe farre many godly persons are deceiued, which beleeue euery light word of hipocriticall persons, esteeming them good christians, giuing thē the right hand offellowship, and opening the treasures of the Lord to these mockers of spiritual things, casting the childrens crummes to dogs, and their precious pearles before these filthy swine, which tread both Christ and his gospell vnder the feete of their heartes, and rent, reuile, persecute and seekethe destruction

2. Ioh. 10

1. Ioh. 4. 1

John. 2. 24.

destruction of the truly religious, would God we were all Naomies in this point, to trie thei^r spirites whether they be of God, seing so many false spirits are gone out into the world; for we must not commit our selues to euery one that will outwardly say as wee belecue, but first see the fruits and afterwards iudge of the tree. We know how many in the gospel our sauour Christ refused, which offered themselues vnto him, for none can come to him but those whom his father draweth. And against this especially do all the flatterring Michaes and please-man preachers of England offend, which as the prophet saith, sowe pillowes vnder the elbowes of the people, that is, they giue them rest in their singular sins if they can say Lord, Lord, they tell them they are good christians, if they come once a weeke to the Church, their deuotion is sufficient, if they spend all their daies in ignorance & vanity, yet a few words at the later end will recouer them. Oh, how feareful and lamentable is the condition of such pastors and people, where they are thus flattered in their sins & stroked in their iniquities, they heare the gospel, feed on the Sacraments, dwell safely in the house of God, and eate of the fatted of the lands, that their iudgement might be without excuse, their damnation is greater, & themselues to prepared oxen for the Lords slaughter house; they cry peace peace, mercy, mercy, speake of plenty not penury, of feasting not famines, of pleasures not sufferings, of mirth not mourning, of newe wine not God his word; nay they bid the most couetous cormorants, incroching vsurers, prodigall ruffians, beastly drunkards, filthy adulterers, cursed blasphemers, common swearers, dumbe ministers, and prophane and carnall atheists, to hope for saluation, whereas the Apostle sayth, not one of these shall inherite the kingdome of God. Is not this to cast childrens bread to doggs, and to make the most holie Gospel a cloake, nay rather a patent or charter to work all manner of licenciousnes? surely if Naomi would not promise any thing to her deere daughter Ruth, but rather discourage her from following the Lord in the triall of her faith, you are as farre wide from any hope of

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offsaing health, as heauen from the earth, or light from darknes: therefore to conclude, as the gold is not known but by the touchstone, so is not any Christian, till he be thoroughly tried in religion, & as the goldsmith will not acceptie (though it seeme neuer so faire) till he haue tried it, so must not wee loose the bands of sins till they be repented, or bind the breaches of iniquity, till they be satisfied, nor account any a Christian till wee haue thoroughly tried him. Other there are which will neuer be satisfied in their brethren, euery day troubling thē with vaine & vnprofitable questions, neuer giuing thē ouer, till they haue wearied thē with their wranglings, seeking to deface in thē that little knowledge which they haue, & discourage them from the profession of christiā religion. But most abhominable is y^e dealing of many with their neighbours, both Christian men & women, who forsaking the cursed pastime of carnall cōpanions, espising the insufficiencie of dumbe and vnpreaching ministers, burning in loue for the pure preaching of Gods word, and seeking that where it is to be found, absent themselves from their assemblies now & then, they present thē to the courts as wicked recusants, where I warrant you, they find as much fauor as Paul did before **Ac. 24. 26.** for thus we are many times vniustly vexed for good cōsciences, turmoiled about for hearing of sermons, almost as much as any papist for abhorring our religion: & this it is that feareth many, causeth other to fall back before troubles come, & dismaith many weake soules when they see their poore brethren in this peaceable time, vnder the gouernment of so godly & gracious a prince, so tormented as is incredible; the experience of this is too too cōmmon in euery corner of our countrey, where there is any diligent preacher or profitable hearer. Let vs therefore my brethren, with Naomi, cease to vexe the godly minded Ruths, both mē & womē: our dānation shalbe the greater, if we draw & driue men from God, the law require it not, the magistrates like it not, our profession forbiddeth it, & accursed are those godles iudges which pronouce any sentence against these innocent persons. Therefore says with the Prophet, Come let vs ascend to the

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the mountaine of the Lord, euen to the hill of the God of Iacob, for he shall teach vs his waies, & we wil walke in his pathes.

So they went fourth. Now are these two good women both going, and also come to Bethelcm, and vndoubtedly their tedious iourney was eased by their mutuall conference: but what thinges happened to them by the way the scripture mentioneth not, onely their intertainment is here set downe, how their comming being noyed about the Cittie, they came vnto them and saluted their olde acquaintaunce Naomi by name. For this question, *is not this Naomi?* after the manner of the Hebrewes is a vsuall manner of affirmation, as wee may see

Gen. 18. 14

17.

Num. 23. 1.

Iud. 6. 3 1.

2. Sam. 3. 8.

in these places of scripture. Where first of all wee see the wonderfull mercy of God toward Naomi, which in so many yeares absent suffered not her memory utterly to perish, but at her first arriuing, did publish her name, and comfort her sorrowes. Thus God hath many blessings in store for the relieuing of his poore afflicted faintes, and surely hee is carefull that the candle of the righteous be not put out for euer. But as in one day (after many yeares sorrow for Ioseph & famine for bread)

Gen. 45. 28

Psal. 30. 6.

Jacob receiued tidings of the welfare of his sonne and prouision for his familie, euen so the Lord compasseth about the faithfull with songs of deliuerance, that though heauines endure for a night, yet ioy commeth in the morning. Let vs therefore with the losse, and laying downe of our owne liues confesse the goodnes of the Lord; for as he draue the king of Babilon for seuen

Dan. 4. 33.

37.

yeares from the throne of maiestic, to the wilderness of wild-beasts, so he called him againe and restored to him his scepter and seate, established his kingdom: all the dayes of his life. Therefore feare not my beloued, haue we now famine? wee shall plentie haue againe: Doo we carry forth our seed weeping? We shall come againe with plentifull sheaues. Haue we sowed in teares? We shall reap in ioy, Haue we bin strangers in other lands? we are come home with Naomi to the Citie of God his people: and finally, those that feare the Lorde shall bee as mount Sion which can neuer be moued: for as these

is a time to mourne, so there is a time to reioyce, and as **Pla. 125. 18**
the wicked shall haue measure for measure, so the god-
ly shall receiue reward, for reward: Secondly by these
wordes wee obserue the fruite of charitie, or dutie of
neighbours and acquaintance: for as these Citizens of
Bethlehem came to see and to comfort Naomi, so must
euery one beare some part of his brothers or sisters sor-
row, in relieuing their troubled minds by their presence
and speeches. We read that Mary went to her cosin E-
lizabeth, being with child, that they might commune &
comfort theselues in the promises of the Lord. We read
how the Iewes accompanied Mary and Martha weep-
ping for Lazarus, and the same also wereade was done
at the death of Dorcas. What shal I say of the four men
which brought the sicke of the palsie vnto Christ: and
most excellent is the fellowship of the Saints in the Pri-
mitiue Church, which are said to continue & abide to-
gether with one accord in praier & breaking of bread,
so that their spirituall comfort of praying, and tempo-
rall refreshing of corporall soode were priuate to any,
but also for their comfort as a young childe is wrapped
in his swadling clothes, so was the infancie of Christes
Church maintained by the companie of their faithfull
fellowship. Oh that we could loue and liue thus toge-
ther, in the bond of vnitie and Christian concord, that
as we are members of one body, so we should not be so
strange one to another, as if the eye had neuer seene the
foote, or the head neuer knowne the legges: such is the
scornefulness of our age, wherein men are ashamed of
Christ in his members, if they be a litle fallen into decay,
how hardly will they comfort them as these Ephrathites
do Naomi a poore widdow now, though once a noble
woman. They will rather curse them with Shemei, than
blesse them with Tziba, but let the faithfull like feeling
members of their brethrens afflictions looke vpon the
Naomies in our daies, some are poore and friendles, o-
ther sicke and harborles, some sorrowfull, some hungry
& many destitute, let vs gather to vs these members of
Christ, our company will more refresh them then our
contribution, our talke more then our almes, our feel-
ling

Luc. 1. 39.
Ioh. 11. 33.
Act. 9. 39.
Mar. 2. 4-40

ling and fellow-prayers more then the distribution of our money, let vs lay hold on that, and yet forget not this, for as God hath giuen both to vs, so he looketh we should giue both to other, Thirdly by this we obserue, how the worlde is wont to comforte one another, for these Bethlemites say vnto her, *Is not this Naomi*, that is, they comfort her with the consideration of her name, which in hebrewe signifieth bewtifull or pleasant, as if they had said vnto her, Although thou art old, yet thou art beautiful, for thou remainest Naomi stil, thy name is a prophety vnto thee, to forewarn thee of thy welfare, and if thou be now like the stubble after the crop, yet thou shalt shortly be as y green hearb or pleasant plant comfort thy self, Iacob alwaies preuailed with God, because his name was alwaies *Israel*: the doue shall be chaste, because it is a doue: the cie shal be bright, because it is the cie, & Naomi shal be blessed, because she is Naomi. Thus worldly persons wish worldly things, & the best they desire most is outward prosperitie. Neither is this simplie vnlawfull, for such as is the sore, such must bee the salue, and where the wound is, the medicine must be ministred: if in the world they bee oppressed, in the same they may not onely wish, but praye for release, yet alwaies remember, that friendes and parties must so desire and request it, as may bee most for the glory of God. Therefore this is our duty, that in praying for earthly benefits, we aime at God his will, but in desiring spiritual blessings, we must regard our saluatiōs. And more also, wee must not so rauishe the mindes of the worldly afflicted, as if they had no other hope, but this temporal welfare: but so promise the blessings of God as they may haue a spirituall signification, for worldly misery is abated but with euerlasting felicitie.

And Naomi's said. In these words Naomi answereth to the comforts of her friends, & telet them she rather deserueth to be called Mara, then Naomi, that is bitter then beautifull: whereby shee teacheth vs howe vaine are outward and worldly titles: for which cause Iames wisheth vs not to be called many maisters, knowing we shal receiue the greater damnation, as if he had said
worldly

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worldly honor bringeth death but desire or loue of carnal comforts cause damnation. When the arke of God was raken by the Philistines, and the sons of Heli both slain, the wife of Phinehas y son of Heli died after her trauaile, and named her son Ichabod: which is by interpretation, wher is the glory? although there a man child was borne yet the woman forgate not her sorrowe, because the arke of God was taken by the heathen, for if she were the daughter to the chiefest in Israel, as shee was the wife to the third, yet what glory had she of her place, when her husband was iustly slain, and her people ouercome, therefore she called her son (no glory) for neither dignity of place, highnes of birth, fruitfulness of children, or the dominion ouer a whole countrey may minister any comfort to them whome the Lord hath hūbled. Rahel that bid Iacob giue her children or els she should die, at the birth of her second child died, & yet had children, she supposed if she were made fruitful, & 1. Sam. 4:28
Gen. 30.7.
had many children she could not chuse but liue in felicity; but hauing the first she called him Ioseph because God would adde more, yet at the second, she called him Ben-oni which is the son of her sorrow, because she died in trauaile, so that shee which accounted bearing of Gen. 35.18.
children her chiefest ioy, by that which she loued, came her greatest sorrow. Thus Naomi, which was once as beautifull and pleasant in prosperitie as any, yet now in aduersity who more bitter then she, yet the very remembrance of her name increaseth her griefe. Were she the daughter of a prince, yet nowe being a begger it is a greater discomfort vnto her, then if she had bene borne poore, for mans nature is like pleasant a plant which prospereth when it groweth higher & higher, but decayeth if it fall lower & lower: if Naomi had bene a Lady, yet hauing lost her husband childrē & wealth, the cogitation of her wonted welfare, encreaseth her disquietnes, euen as Phinehas his wife and Rahel at the birth of their children. Why then do men thus lightly esteeme of worldly vainglory? Cannot one measure of honour afford one mite of cōfort to a distressed person? Do not mē because they are proper wax proud, & because they
are

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are learned, proud, ambitious, what then is the fruit of worldly titles? is pride the reward of proportion? of tyne of worship? scornfulnes of riches? and ambition of learning? surely these things in the day of trouble can minister no medicine to make ease if godlines be not with them. What was Achan the better for his gold, when he was stoned to death? Absalon for his beauty, when he was hanged? Haman for his honour, when he was mounted vpon his owne gallows? the sorcerers of Egypt for their knowledge, when darknes was ouer the land? or Herod for the peoples voice when they cried a God and not man, and the wormes fel vpon him & consumed him? Trust not therfore in princes, much lesse in the titles of princes, in the strength of an horse, much lesse in the wealth of man: say not, I shall be the better because I am a gentleman, a doctour, or a noble man, for when Salomon had considered all these things, he said all is vanity and vexation of spirite.

For the almighty hath. This is the reason wherfore she denieth her name, or rather changeth it, shewing that her first name had nothing in it which did expresse the relation betweene her selfe and it, but her second name doth most significantly declare her bitter affliction. Where we first of all obserue the cause which moued the fathers to giue suche names to their children who to signifie or put them in minde of their duty or some other euent. So God called the first man Adam which is as much as man or earthly, because hee was made of the earth, or the red earth: so Adam called his wife *Channash* (which we call Heuah by reason of the Hebrue letters) because she should be the mother of all liuing: the like may bee said of Noah, Seth, Abraham, Izaac, Israel, Samuel, Iohn Baptist and many others, who being named eyther by the Lord himselfe or by other, were so called, to put them in minde of their duties, or to note the thankfulness of their parents. The which is also lawfull for godly parents now to imitate, in giuing such names to their children, as may be notes to al the world of their profession. But some cannot brook this liberty, accompting it newnes and pre-

Ec. 1. 17. 18

Gen. 1. 27.
Gen. 3. 20.

eisenesse in them that vse it, as though it were a deadly sinne, one iot to depart from the custome of the multitude. But this curiositie is well confuted by the name of Iohn Baptist: ancestors must not alwaies be followed, those which are new creatures in Iesus Christ, may also haue new names. But in this the worlde bewraie their palpable Ignorance, for they liked the olde names which were verie plaine in their owne tongues, wherein they were giuen, but English names they cannot abide belike for verie feare, least their names should bee witness of condemnation against their licentiousnesse. Again, they account it a glory proper to a few persons to be called by the worldly surnames of some of their great ancestours, but they wil not beare these names of reioycing, thankesgiuing, repentance, godlines, mercy, constancie, & such like, they will as easily admit them, as a deafe adder the voice of the charmer. But let the godly in this vse christian wisdom and ancient libertie, for that which was lawfull in this point in the first age, the Iews commonwealth, & the primitiue church, with the practise of all ages since, is also lawfull for them, to giue holy and significant names to their children, for I would haue all (if it were possible) to haue no other names but such as they vnderstand: if they be called by the names of the ancient fathers, kings, or prophets, which we reade of in the Scriptures, it is also needful that they vnderstand the liues and the dispositions of those persons, that as they haue them for the euidence of their names, so they might looke vpon them, as the examples of their faith and manners.

Secondly, by this wee note, what God his children thinke of their suffering, which Naomi setteth out by this worde *Bitternesse*, for bitterness of all other tastes doth most dull the sense, and corrupt the stomacke, so that they account their afflictions as sharpe to them as to anie, and may as lawfully complaine of them vnto the Lord, This I speake for instruction of them that are ignorant, and the comfort of the afflicted. First for instruction, because some thinke they are not truly religious, excepte they feele their miseries no more than a

stone, when they are afflicted, and this maketh them so to wauer and doubt of themselues, that in their greatest plagues, they can hardly receiue any comfort, being alwaies troubled with this, that if they were faithfull they should delight more in their tribulations: yet beloued, marke a little, Naomi calleth it in this place bitterness, as if she had called the enimie to her health, for when Peter would expresse the daunger of Simon Magus, because he offered mony for the gift of the holy ghost, he telleth him he is in the very gal of bitterness, by that metaphor or allegory declaring the loathsomenes of sin to his soule, as bitterness to the body. Dauid saith that his affliction was his death, as if he had said, euen as a man striueth to be deliuered in the pangs of death, so he from his tribulation, Iob that mirrour of patience, did so delight in his sufferings, y in one place he seemeth to accuse God himselfe, to adde to his transgressions, that is to make his sins seem greater then they were, and how doth he desire to plead with God about his affliction, & cursed the day and houre of his death? Our sauiour would neuer haue warned vs that in the world we should haue sorrow and lamentation, had he not knowne that the smart of our sufferings would thrust forth abundance of teares, through the vehemencie of the paines: and presently he addeth a secrete comparison between a woman in trauail, & a christian in persecution, so that as the one hath most vehement sorrowes and pitifull lamentations, so also may the other: infinite testimonies might bee brought for the prooffe of this, to teach vs, that God his child is made of fleshe as well as of spirite, and the fleshe is weake, though the spirite bee willing: therefore wee may feare and crie vnder the burden of our paines, that our afflictions are bitter vnto vs, and that the hand of the Lord is grievous vpon vs. Againe, for the comfort of the godly I speake this, that if any haue more grievously complained of their sufferings, let them impute it to the sharpnes of their paines, and the weaknes of their natures: wee see this Naomi calleth bitterness vnto her, such as shee would not willinglye take.

A&S. 2. 23.

Psa. 31. 10.

Ioh. 16. 18.

19.

take except it were for the phisicke of her soule, and now almost ten yeeres space this grieve hath growen vppon her, so that it may seeme of all others shee was most grieued, for now she vttereth her minde as freshly, as if the potion were yet vndigested in the stomacke. Be comforted therefore my sorrowfull brethren and sisters, you see you are not alone in this miserie, for Dauid, Job, Naomi, Annah, Nehemiah, and many other are as farre indebted to the Lord in this point, as euer was any: strue to suppress it by prayer, and quench it by singing of psalms; neither let vs iudge but charitably of those which in this case are troubled, bee it for the losse of their children, the death of theyr husbandes, the decaye of theyr wealth, or the lacke and want of their health. If they seeme impatient and weaker then our selues, let vs beare part of their burthens vppon our christian comforts, that they with vs, & we with them, like feling members of the same infirmities may sustaine our crosses by our mutual supplications, and obtaine our deliuerance by the blood of Christ.

I went out full. In these words she amplyfieth her former complaint by this comparison of a full vessell and an empty, shewing that as the fullest vessel is the soundest, & the emptiest good for nothing, so it fareth with her when she looketh vpon her former life, when she went forth shee had plentie, but now shee returneth in want: then she was sound, but now broken, then ioy full, but now sorrowful. why should she be called pleasant or beautifull, or by her old name, seeing God hath humbled her, whereas in times past hee vpheld her in prosperitie, but now hee hath cast her downe into aduersitie. Where we first of all obserue the nature of worldly prosperity, which to day is like a full vessel, but to morrowe like an emptye, now it is greene, anone it is withered, now it groweth, anone it is cut downe, now like Nabuchadnezzar sitting vppon his throane with his counsellors and courtiers of estate about him, but anone both Court and Country driue him to the companye of wilde beastes; for as a little breache emptyeth the barrell, so a lyttle trouble

bringeth worldly welfare to wallow in the mire. Therefore we read of none, either king or country which had such a prosperous estate but it had one enemy or other to worke his woe: if wee consider the raigne of Salomon,

1. king. 10. mon, where gold was innumerable and siluer as plentifulfull as stones, yet it wanted not his miseries, the people were punished by payments to their prince, the king was threatened with the losse of ten parts of his kingdom, & God stirred Hadad the Edomite against him,

& 11. cap. where ended their peace. Where is then the royalty of Salomon? was it not cast downe in one day, his riches consumed, his buildings burned, his children captiuated, his wisdome turned to idolatry, his prosperitie decayed and all his honor ouerturned? Oh that worldlings would consider their fickle estate and bee admonished of their imminent dangers: the Lord putteth the

11. 14. into his balance, & finding them too light casteth them out. Ieremy saith, they are but fatted sheepe, kept for the day of slaughter, now in the pasture and presently in the fire, they are but aduanced to be cast down againe, as the vessell is filled to bee emptied in due time, the eares which are now full of corn in the field, anon shall ly without on the dunghill, Babilon the queene of the world which ruled as yet, was troden downe & made a seruant. Tyrus that crowned men with her wealth, was consumed by warre: for the Lord of hosts decreeth al this, to staine the pride of glory, & to bring

Ier. 12. 3.

to contempt all that be mightie vpon the earth. Weep, weep O daughters of honor, the days will come when your tender shal not be regarded, for your welth shal not alwaies indure, the crown abideth not from generation to generation, your houses shall bee ouerturned your names forgotten, your children impouerished, your glory defaced, your inheritance changed, your welfare powred on the earth like water, and your worshippe shall bee neuer repayed. This haue God his dearest children felt, and the greenest trees haue bene scorched with the fire of God his wrath, for he is not delighted in worldly brauery, but hath buried great treasure in the sea which shall neuer bee founde, to keepe man-

Isay. 23. 9.

kind

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kind from the ende of his purpose: for this is their honour, they get nothing but with much trauaile, and in one houre, loose labour, life and wealth.

Secondly, that which in our texte is, *the Lorde hath humbled me*, in the hebrew is; *The Lorde hath testified or witnessed against me*, for by his iudgements he humbleth vs, as it were producing witneses to accuse vs of our iniquities, as wee see in common iudgments, all things passe by euidence if they be ancient, & by witnes if it be late, so the Lord when he hath a quarrell against vs, hee first prooueth vs guiltie by witnes of our sins, and then punisheth vs for committing transgressions. For this cause Moses commaundeth the book of the law to be laid vp in the side of the arke of the covenant, for a witnesse against the people: so the Lord speaketh by Dauid, *Heare O my people, and I wyll speake, heare O Israel, & I will testifie vnto thee, for I am thy God: and after this hee reporteth his witnes against them, first y^e their sacrifices were corrupted, that their religion was all outward, they spake well but did ill. And thus God witnesseth the sins of common-weales by the changing of their prince, the sins of publique persons by casting them out of their office, the sins of priuate persons, sometimes by imprisonment sometimes by scourging or pouerty, and sometimes by sicknes, aluding to trials of iudgment where the noble is condemned for treason as well as the meaner person for stealing. And this my beloued hath the Lord testified against vs, our peace hath beene threatened by warre, our prince by treason, our banqueting by famine, our excesse by penury, our pride by pouerty, our peoples contempt of preaching by pestilence, and still the Lord hideth one sin frō this witnes that we might repent for all. Then we must needs set down with our selues, that our actions are noted, our prophaning of Saboths registred, our contemps against God his ministers described, the times of our drunkennes, idlenes & wantonnes, numbred, our owne consciences examined, the witnessses produced, we arraigned, and now, euen now before God his iudgment, scate in danger to*

Deut. 31. 5
26.

Psal. 50. 7.

Pro. 23. 1.

Esth. 7. 9.

Esa. 22. 19.

be euerlastingly condemned, for as Naomi sayth, the Lord emptieth vs of his graces, & testifieth against vs; who shall plead for vs when the iudge knoweth our guiltinesse, surely, surely there is no hope of pardon but to the penitent, & patience must be praied for, that our suffering may be eased.

So she returned with Ruth the Moabiteffe with her.

This verse is the conclusion of this first chapter, where is described the time of Naomies returne vnto Bethlehem from the countrey of Moab which was the beginning of barley haruest, that the reporte shee heard in Moab, (how God had visited his people and giuen them bread) might at her first arriual bee found true: wherein is noted the blessing of God vnto her that she came in the beginning of haruest, the pleasantest and profitabest time of all the yeere. This barley haruest was in the latter parte of the first moneth, and the beginning of the second among the Jewes, which with vs are called March and Aprill, for the warmnesse of those countreyes is such, that their haruest is ripe much sooner then in ours.

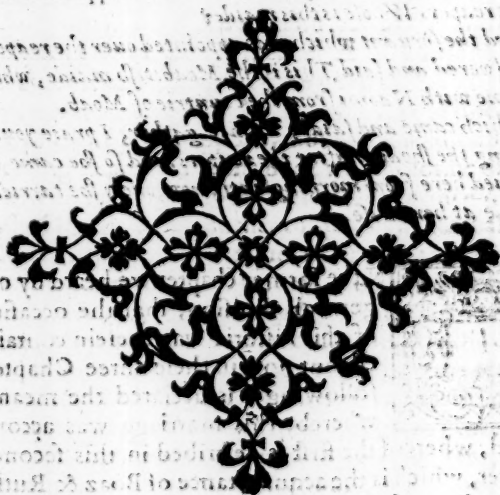
By the which also we note, that shee had a prosperous successe in her iourney, that euen in those dangerous dayes, shee came safely to Bethlehem: al those doubts which in the beginning we shewed you, might haue hindered her iourney, shee well ouerpassed, for no doubt in so rare a matter, if any lette had bene offered, the holy ghost would not haue omitted it. So that this teacheth vs with Naomi, that as shee was not hindered in her trauaile from Moab to God his people, euen so must not we be stayed from the profession of true religion. Shee was an old woman, yet shee would go so tedious a iourney to the company of the faithfull, therefore let no man thinke that age excuseth them from the true worshippe of God, or sincere profession of religion. Shee had little company to encourage her, onely poore Ruth her daughter in law wayted vpon her, therefore it must not hinder or discourage vs that so fewe followe religion, for Christs flocke is a little flocke, like the first fruits of the haruest field, which is
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but a handfull to many cartloades, Naomi aduentured her body and forsoke her goods, to come to the house of the Lord. Oh how colde are our daies, when men neede neither of both, yea they will hardly go any farther for knowledg thē the vilest atheist in the world: & to conclude, many dangers hung ouer her head, yet by the prouidence of God she escaped all, euen so my brethren admit no delays, inuent no excuses, receiue no hinderances, imagine no suspitions, and abstaine from all stayes which maye let you from comming to the mountaine of the Lord, the company of the faithfull, for blessed are the people, whose God is Ichouah, and it is better to abide but one daye in the courtes of the Lord, than a thousand yeares in the pallaces of the wicked. Now let vs giue praise to the Lord.

The end of the fourth Lecture.



G 4

The

The fifth Lecture.

Ruth. Chapter 2. verse 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

1 Now Naomi's husband had a kinsman, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

2 And when Ruth the Moabitish sawe together with her in lowe. Let me goe, I pray thee, into the field, to gather eares after him, in whose eyes I shall finde fauour, and she said, Go my daughter.

3 And she went and came to gather in the field, after the reapers: and shee met with the possession of a field pertaining to Boaz, who was of the familie of Elimelech.

4 And behold, when Boaz came from Bethleem, he said to the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they said, The Lord blesse thee.

5 And Boaz said to his seruant which was appointed ouer the reapers. Whose is this maide?

6 And the seruant which was appointed ouer the reapers, answered and said, This is the Moabitish maide, which came with Naomi from the countrie of Moab.

7 Which came and said, Let mee gather, I pray you, among the sheares, after the reapers, and so she came, & staid here from morning vntill now, onely she carried a little at her house.



In the former chapter we heard by our general diuision, that the occasion of this historie was therein contained, but now in these three Chapters following, is declared the meanes whereby this marriage was accomplished, whereof the first is described in this seconde Chapter, which is the acquaintance of Boaz & Ruth, and the circumstances thereof, as shall appeare in the speciall treatise of euery particular thing. The occasion of this acquaintance is the gleanings of Ruth in the field

of

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of Boaz. These seuen verses containe two partes, the first and principall parte is of Boaz, and the second of Ruth. The first part is contained in the 1. 4. 5. 6. 7. ver. wherein Boaz is described, vers. 1. to be Naomies kinsman by her husband, Secondly, to bee a man of great wealth, in 5. other verse is set down his diligence, which came to the field to visit his workmen, & view the companie. His actions after hee came to the field, are, first the salutation of the reapers, vers. 4. and they doo the like to him: secondly, he asketh his seruant who Ruth was, vers. 5. To which question the seruant answereth, first telling his master that it was Ruth the Moabitess, the companion of Naomi, vers. 6. Secondly, he excuseth her gathering, because shee asketh leaue, and tarried there but onely that morning, vers. 7.

The second part, which respecteth Ruth, is contained, verses 2, 3. Wherin first she asketh leaue of her mother to go and gather eares, where she should find fauour, and her mother graunteth, vers. 2. Secondly, the place where she gathereth is described, which was the field or possession of Boaz, her husbands kinsman. Of these partes let vs briefly speake, as the spirite of God shall giue utterance, and the time permit.

Now Naomies husband. In this verse is contained the description of Boaz, vpon whome the whole historie following dependeth. This Boaz was the sonne of Salmon, who was sonne to Nahasson, the prince of the host of Iudah: the mother of Boaz was Rachab the harlot (which receiued the spies of Israel into her house at Iericho) as wee see in Mathew, and is commended for her faith, by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrewes. So that euerie way wee see this dignitie commended vnto vs: if we looke for birth, his grandfather was the chiefe of the princely tribe of Iudah: if for authoritie, he was, saith this scripture, of great power: if for wealth, his inheritance must needs bee great, who

I. Chr. 2. 10
Ios. 2. 4. 5.
Math. 1. 5.
Heb. 11. 31

Cap. 2. 23.

deale

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deale heere with meane and base personages, being all of a kindred, howsoeuer some are sooner come to decay then other: but out of this wee learne many profitable lessons.

First that seeing Boaz and Elemelech are said to be kinsmen as those which are descended from the same predecessors or ancestry, wee are admonished of the frailty and vanitie of worldly dignitie, that howsoeuer parents prouide for the maintenance of posteritie, yet the Lord must dispose the decay of their children. Here wee see poore Naomi hath a wealthy and an honourable kinsman, yet shee a destitute and a desolate widdowe. Her husband and shee were no meane persons, but vndoubtedly both descended of noble families: the yeares were but few since the death of Iouah, vnder whom the inheritance of euery tribe, was giuen by lot, and all the Iewes & Israelits wealthy possessors, yet see this godly Naomi is faine to liue of the gleanings of her daughter, which neither her parents, nor her husband did euer thinke vppon. Beholde therefore as in a glasse, the perfect image of temporall felicitie, the father a king, the children beggers, the father honourable, the sonne not worshipfull, the predecessors the chiefeest in authoritie, but the successors the meanest in calling: this made the fathers thinke, that the world was like the sea, here a mightie waue, and there a great downefall, some thought it to be like ice, where a man can neuer stand sure, but the one will bee breaking, or hee bee slyding, some like to trees, whereof the tallest are soonest ouerturned, but all agree in this that worldly felicitie is miserable vanitie. For, our present wealth is like a pleasant summer, which must needes come to an ende: though all the world shoulde striae to the contrary: it was accounted to king David, for a speciall blessing of GOD vnto him, and none other, that shee shoulde not bee without a sonne to sit on his seate, if his posterite woulde obserue his commaundementes: yet wee see in Ioseph and Marye the mother of Christ, bee- ing both of his offspring, how they could not obtaine

Sam. 7. 12.

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in his owne City, a Chamber to lye in, but were faine to lodge in a stable, so that this is not onely to the wicked, but to the dearest Saints of God. Adam continued not still in paradise, but was cast out that his felicitie might be heauenly, and not earthly: euen so the posteritie of the righteous are brought into pouerty, that they set not their mindes vpon temporall glory. Therefore the Lord doth heere correct vs, with pinching pouertie, that there wee shoulde not with the worlde be condemned for delighting in vanity. Then by this we learne humility in our wealth and worship, honour and dignitie: set not vp your hornes so highe, sayth Dauid and if riches encrease set not your heartes vpon them, for the Lord resisteth the proude, and giueth grace to the humble and meeke. Wee read of stately kings and Emperours which haue beene caste from throne to the foote stoole, of wealthy persons which in one houre haue been vtterly vndone, but of children whose parents were honourable, riche, many thousandes brought to perpetuall slauerye. If you feare not your owne estates, yet care for your posteritie, and make much of them whome now you see cast downe, the poore, the destitute, the despised, the miserable: for if Ionathan, in his honour, make of Dauid in his humilitie, when Dauid commeth to his kingdome, hee will aduance his offspring to his owne table: euen so if you make much of them that are poore now when you shall bee humbled in your posterity, the Lord shall prouide for your issue by these that haue beene fauoured by you. The wheele of the worlde runneth rounde, sometime that which was lowest is highest, and that which was highest is made lowe againe. so be you assured, the Lord aduanceth dayly out of the dust, to sit with princes, therefore make you friendes of the vnrighteous Mamon, that when you shall haue neede, they may receiue you into theyr euerlasting habitations. Distribute liberally, giue plentifully, liue peaceably, walke humbly, for the wealth of the world doth not alwayes

Luc. 2. 7.

Psa. 62. 10

alway last, neither the crown from generation to generation.

Secondly, by this we gather, that the godly may safely enjoy great possessions, & of the blessing of God be exceeding rich men: but some will say, indeede they may be wealthy, but with the hazarde of their soules, for Christ saith. Howe hardely shall they which haue riches, enter into the kingdome of God: it is easier for a cable to goe thorough the eye of a needle then for a rich man to enter into the kingdome of heauen. Then if the danger of it bee so great, the poorest condition is the safest welfare. I graunt you, but Christ speaketh of carnall wealthy, which make their goods their God, as after he saith, those that put their trust in their richs. Of this sorte the world was neuer fuller: as on the contrary, of the other there was neuer fewer. you shal haue them in all places which speake against the Gospel, because it is an enemy to their liuings and offices, promotions and honors, like Demetrius for *Diana*, a heathen deuill: you shall haue other that will offer largely to the Gospel, like the young man that came to Christ, but when it toucheth a little greater cost, then farewell religion. But this is the faulte of the men, not of their wealth, and yet I am perswaded that there are many wealthy Abrahams, which will gyue of the tenthes of their possessions, to the heauenly Melchisedech Iesus Christ, many Lots that wil harbour the angels of God, and rather wishe violence to their own daughters, then to the righteous: and finally, like to this Boaz in riches & religion, of whom we dayly pray the Lord increase the number.

Thirdly wee see in this Boaz an excellent example of the reward of religion and faith, for we haue heard that hee was the sonne of Rachab, which receiued the spies of Iosuah, who afterwarde was married to Salmon the son of Nahasson, by whome came this godly & wealthy Boaz. In this then we see true the saying of the Apostle, that godlinesse hath the promises of this life and of the life to come: for in her self she was blessed with an honourable marriage, in her posterity with

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a godly and a wealthy sonne. This my beloued is a notable encouragement to Religion, for Christ sayth that whosoever shall for him forsake father and mother, wife or children, shall receiue many times so muche in this world, but eternall saluation in the life to come. This answereth and stoppeth the mouthes of the enemyes which call the professors, bankruptes, impouerished and decayed persons, yea as base as beggers in this world, which by theyr religion vndooc themselves, and their posteritye. But on the contrary we affirme that Religion bringeth no discommoditie, euen in worldly thinges. the reason is, because it teacheth vs to vse our riches aright. If a man had mountaines of money, and knew not how to imploy it, what profite coulde hee receiue thereby? euen so surely, without Christ and his gospell, I meane the true knowledge thereof, there is no lawfull vse of these worldly benefites, and except euery one learne to apply them by the word of God, hee possesseth his wealth, as a thiefe doeth the purse of a true man, and in the presence of God is no better then a violent robber, which taketh away the money from the lawfull possessors whych haue prooued and learned the way to vse it: & as they haue it without his knowledge, euen so they shall vse it without his blessing. Therefore be not discouraged my deere brethren, come forward in religion, it is the deuill that telleth you, you must make breade of stones, that is, you must relye vpon the worlde, and follow the custome thereof: there is greater plentie and store in the garners of God his word, then in all the cornefieldes of the world. Her which could feede fye thousand people, Ioh. 6. 13. with fye barley loaues and twoo fishes, hath hee not enough for the maientenaunce of thy family? He which fed the host of Israell almost fourtye yeeres with Angelles foode: are not the heauens his for euermore? when almost all the worlde was in a famine, did hee not provide for his seruant Eliah, first commaunding the rauen to bring him breade and meate mornynge and evening to the brooke Cherith, and that being dried vp, sustained him with a widdow and her son, by a hand-ful of meale & a little oyle for a long season? Did not our
2. kin. 14. 34
graci-

2.Kin.5. 12 gracious father multiplie the oyle of a poore prophesie
 34 widdow into many vessels, which before coulde not fill
 one? And what shall I say more? I haue neuer seene
 the righteous forsaken, or their children left destitute.

And Ruth. After the holy ghost had set downe the description of Boaz, as the necessarie occasion to vnderstand that which followeth, in the next place hee expresseth this of Ruth. Wherein he sheweth vs the carefulnesse of Ruth, for her mother and her selfe being in a strange place, woulde not in hunger harbour at home, but rather aduenture her perill in an honest labour, by going abroad to glean in the fieldes, therefore to her mother she commeth and asketh leaue, which beeing granted, forth she goeth, the prouidence of the Lord directing her journey, shee commeth to the haruest field of Boaz her kinsman.

Where first of all wee gather, what manner of life they lead after they came to Bethlehem, namely, a verie poore, base, and despised estate, not halfe so good to see to, as that which they lead and liued amonge the Moabites, insomuch as one may nowe saye vnto mee, you tolde vs euen nowe, the golden rewardes and precious commoditie of true Religion, which it bringeth to all them that faithfully receiue it but you see these two godly women, as armed examples against your self, they liued wealthye in Moab, but poorely in Iudah; with the wicked they found gentle liberalitie, but with the godly they indure wofull pouertie. What colde intertainment doo they finde at Bethlehem, euen in the Church of God, for whose sake one forsooke her countrie, the other her wealth, and both of them their welfare? so that the profession of religion looseth our friendes, denyeth our country, disquieteth our peace, ingendereth our trouble, consumeth our wealth, and decayeth our substance. Is this the profite of your profession, which promiseth mountaines of securitie, and payeth multitude of miseries: Howe shall wee bee encouraged to religion, when at the first entry wee shall pay so great an in-come, and depart from a fine worth all our substance? To this I answer, that if the beginning bee

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not so ioyful as you or they wished, yet the end answered their expectation. I grant, you shall first find a little want, but in the end you shall possesse a great gaine. A man that hath a thousand pounds laide beside him, & layeth it out vpon a bargaine, whereof he shall receiue no profite in many yeares, but the date expired, and the day of receite come, he receiueth his owne, and many thousand pounds for his gaine, you will graunt at the first he emptieth his coffers and bags, and leaueth him selfe bare and monyleffe, yet you would account him a foole, if he would not vpon sure bands of so great advantage aduenture his owne, and giue forth his monie: Euen so it is in religion, it is a pearle for which we must sell both liuing & lands, and yet it is worth both, and many thousand times more: if thou feele not the profit at the first, tarry a while, thou hast the promise & band of the Lord of hosts, hee is able and willing to performe and paie at the time appointed, and if thou canst abide a litle want of earthly commodities, shortly thou shalt see them rolling vpon thee in excellent abundance and exceeding quantities. And this teacheth vs with what mind we must embrace religion, not for any present commoditie, or temporall gaine, but with denial of our liues and riches, that they may serue vs as ordinarie expenses in our iourney to euerlasting saluation, the kingdome of heauen. For they are much deceiued, that receiue the truth to increase their wealth, making Christianitie a gainefull trade, for although it hath the promises, yet it hath not alway the possession of things in this life, but as the right heires are many times put beside their inheritances, which are possessed by vnlawfull owners, so the godly are the right heires of the whole worlde, although the wicked haue driuen them out of possession, for the which the Apostle said, that godlinesse hath the promises of this life, and also of the life to come. Againe, those promises that the meeke shall possesse the earth, and their seede shall inherite the land, and especiallye that the verie same which are the elected heyres of grace, are also the appoynted inherytours of this worlde.

But

But this my beloued must establishe our mindes, that as the seed which is cast into the ground, seemeth for a long season to be lost, yet in the end it groweth forth the comfort of mankind and the great profite of the possessors, so although at the first the fruite of Religion is peraduenture but sharp in worldly affaires, yet if wee waite like the husbandman vntill haruest, our consciences shall be plentifull garners of heauenly corne, for the present comfort of our liues, and the perpetuall benefit of our soules. A man dresseth his vineyard all the yeare long, and doth nothing but empty his purse, and weary his body in the tillage and pruning and digging thereof, yet there is but one vintage or time of gathering grapes, euen so we must willingly depart with our wealth, and trauaile in diligence, for the preparing of our soules, to beare fruite to the Lord & the end wilbe most profitable, though & beginning seem most chargeable. The like may be said of the marchant, which cutteth the seas of the goldsmith, that melterh his metal, & of euery worldly trade which at the first begin with charges, but at the last acquite the cost, and satisfie the desire, & end with the increase of substance: which are but carnall and outward things, to put vs in minde of inward and spirituall significations, for as in none of these we are discouraged by the costly entrance, so, more accursed shall we be, if we forsake the wel of the water of life, the running fountaine of euerlasting health, to rake in the puddles of transitorie riches, for feare the one will giue vs too much ease, and for feare the other will withdraw our wealth, which is like the Gergesites sin, which had rather possesse their heards of swine, then enioy the presence, and preaching of Iesus Christ. Come not to religion for hope of worldlye aboundance, for neither Abraham, or the Israelites, or Rachab, or Ruth, or Zacheus, or Cornelius, or anye

Gen. 12.1. of the faithfull had this intention. But the Lorde
 Exo. 12.38. for our farther strengthening, hath giuen two blessings,
 Ios. 6.29. that if the temporall fayle which are but conditionall,
 Heb. 19.8. yet the euerlasting benefites shal neuer deceiue: for al-
 Act. 10.1, though the leaues fall, yet the bodies of the trees abide
 continually

continually. Therefore let vs stay our mindes vpon this double string, which is grounded vpon the credite of him that giueth the promise, before whom heauen and earth shall decay, and the sunne shall loose her light, rather then he frustrate the hope of the godly.

Secondly, here wee note a most excellent example of obedience to parents, and auoyding of idlenes. Ruth was lately come to Bethlehem, where it is likely shee might long haue taried, before her mother would haue entreated her to so base a labour as gathering of barley, but seeing her selfe employed in nothing, first shee commeth to her mother, and after asketh leaue, as one desirous of some honest, though neuer so simple calling. If shee had departed, not acquainting her with it, being to labour for their liuing, shee might wel bee excused: but this seemeth much, that shee must come vnto her, not to tell her shee would goe to such a busines, but to giue her leaue to gleane in the fieldes, promising shee would not go beyond her bounds, but onely gather in that place, where the owner thereof should grant their license: vnto which when the mother had graunted, forth shee goeth to the felde of Boaz. Where wee see what effect godlinesse worketh in the hearts of children, for Ruth offered her seruice, which her mother intreated not, shee abhorred no labour were it neuer so base, shee was not ashamed of her pouerty, euen in a straunge countrey: and all this must bee imputed to her religion. For as Ioseph for the feare of God, bore with the wrath of his father, when hee tolde Gen. 37. 10 him his vision of the sun and the moone and the cleuen stars bowing vnto him, so did Ruth with the poore estate of her mother in law, which had nothing to liue by: thus the Apostle teacheth children to obey their Eph. 6. 1. parents in all things, that is, not onely to be willing to performe their commaundements, but also to be alway contented with their estate, for this wretchednes of cursed children, is worthy to be condemned, where in those which haue wealthy parents, will please them, till they haue gotten their riches, which are like the prodigall sonne in the Gospell: other because their parents

are poore, will thinke they are bound vnto them in nothing, because they haue little or no wealth to leaue behind them: both these kindes of children are heere condemned by the example of Ruth, who did not onely forsake her wealth to goe with her mother, but also labor with her hands to maintaine her liuing, yea to her step-mother, which is more commendable then if it were done to her naturall parents. The vse of this doctrine is, to exhort and stirre vp parentes, to bee more carefull to teach their children the feare of the Lorde, then to leaue them mountaines of riches behind them, which if they will practise, would their countenances bee so sorrowfull as often they are? would not their naturall oliues, I meane their children, anoint their faces with the oyle of cheerefulness: if mothers either would or could doo as Naomi did for Ruth, teach their children the feare of the Lorde, their hearts should not bee so heauie, for their vngracious life. But since parentes had no care to instruct their children, children had no feare to disobey their parents. Will they in these dayes acquaint their fathers & mothers with their iourneis & labors? or runne not they headlong to their owne vtter vndoing? they chuse them masters and seruices without fathers consent, they marrie & are married against parents good will: do they not take pleasure for profit, and pastime for godlines? thinking theselues to be borne for wantonnesse, referring the care of their olde age to their gray headed parents, and neuer considering till beggery catch their bodies, & damnation their soules. Surely, as the fruite is sower because it is not grafted, so their manners are wicked, because they want religion: this lieth then in the ouerlouing parents, who make such dandlings of their babes, while they are young, that they care not for their fathers when they bee olde. They consider not, that Lyons are tamed whē they are yong, that trees are bowed when they are twigges: And that Salomon saith, Instruct a childe when he is young, the way of his life, and when he is old he shall not departe from it. Their owne ignorance is so palpable, that their children learne nothing but folly: they themselues so vaine, that the other are wanton: they so obstinate, that

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their seede is rebellions: and finally, a wilde vine bring
 eth forth nothing but wilde grapes, and ignorant pa-
 rents must haue vngenerous children. Therefore seeing
 by nature you wold haue obedient and wise children,
 teach them the feare of the Lord, for that is the begin-
 ning of wisdom, and if you would haue your names
 in your posteritie long to endure, the praise of it conti-
 nueth for euer. Thirdly, here we may note an example
 of christian honestie, one of the fruits of religion; for
 she telleth her mother, she would goe gather where she
 could get leaue, as if the holy ghost had said, the glea-
 nings are for the poore, yet poore men must not take
 them, without the consent and fauour of the owners. Pro. 1. 7
Pla. 111. 10
 The Lord euery where exhorteth to giue to the poore, Leuit. 19. 9
Deut. 15. 7
 but he neuer bid the poore take where they found, vn-
 knowing to the possessor: but they must as Ruth heere
 doeth, not take their right, the very giste of the Lord,
 without the fauor of man. This condemneth the rash-
 nes of many, which thinke if they bee poore, that men
 are bounde to giue to them, and small matters they
 may take freely, without y consent of him that posses-
 seth it: yet we see not onely religion, but also plaine rea-
 son to gaine-say it: for the least thing a man hath is his
 owne, as well as the greatest, & one law condemneth
 the taking of a handfull, and a bushell of corn, though
 the offence be not great. But some say, it was permit-
 ted by the Lorde, that a man might take the eares of
 corne and rub them in his hande and eate them, as the
 disciples did, without the consent and trespassse of the
 possessor: he might also take a bunch of grapes & eate
 them, and likewise the fruit of the orchard, by the same
 law, and therefore we may take without the consent of
 him that possesseth it. I answer, if the question bee
 made of an apple, or an eare of corne, or a bunch of
 grapes, as then it was permitted, so I think ther is none
 that wil now stand in it: but then you must remember
 by the same law, that no man might put a sickle into
 the corne to reape downe a handfull, neither yet fil any
 litle mesure with grapes or apples without the consent
 of the owner. But now men will take great measures

Deut. 23. 24
25.

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and quantities, and yet thinke not themselves satisfied, and being winked at for once, yet will not proceed till they bee forbidden, and then will they vncharitably and vngodly report of such men as wil not suffer their goods to be spoiled by them.

Lastly, when her mother had graunted, forth shee goeth, and commeth to the possession of Boaz her kinsman: where we may behold the hand of the Lorde fauoring her diligence, and leading her to the appointed place where among all other she might be, as shee was most gently intreated: for she a silly straunger, knowing none beside her mother, not acquainted with people or country, was ignorant whither to goe but God which directeth the goings of all, ordered her footsteps to his possession, where first shee should find fauour and feeding, that by this meanes the way for her marriage might be prepared. Where we see an excellent example of the prouidence of God, looking vpon the poorest as well as the richest, and working all things in the world from the highest to the lowest. Hee which directeth the descending of the sparrowes vpon the ground, doth he not also consider the goings of the poore. It is no dishonor to him, (as some would haue it, that they might more freely giue themselves to iniquitie) to note euery vile and loathsome thing in the world, or to looke vpon the base as well as the best: surely if any thing be vncomely, it is to the sinfull, but to him which is alwaies righteous are all thinges pure. What parentes doo not loue the basest partes of their childrens bodyes, which were borne of themselves? yet greater is the loue of God vnto vs, than the loue of a mother to her owne sonne: neither doth he or can hee but loue the meanest worke of his creation as well as chiefest, and the silly fly as well as the stately King. Oh how doth this comfort vs more then all the world beside, when we knowe the king of glory beholdeth our nakednes and pouerty, and giueth his Angels charge ouer vs, that not the poorest Lazarus may bee lost, but our bodies either eased with reliefe, or parted from life, our soules may ascend to the bosome of Abraham. E-

Mat. 10 34.

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even he which directeth the seruant of Abraham to the city of Nachor, and brought Rebecca out to draw water, and moued her answere to his prayer, her curtesie to satisfie his expectation, did also leade Ruth to the fields of Boaz, and guideth all the faithfull to the ende of their desires, knowing the counsels of the heart, disposing the words of the mouth, feeding the hungry with good things, and sanderth the riche away emptie, conducting vs all for his mercies sake to walke in his pathes of righteousnes.

But behold. After these things set downe by the holy Ghost concerning Ruth, he returned to Boaz again, and this verse is the beginning of the second parte of that which respecteth him, in the which is declared his comming from Bethlehem, his saluation to the reapers and their answere to him againe.

By the which wee gather the duty of all maisters of families and greate persons in the worlde, which is, not onely to be carefull their busines be performed by other, but also that them selues as the eye witnesses of their seruants fidelity, should looke ouer their labours. This wee may see in Boaz, hee commeth from the Citie to the haruest field: he had committed the care of the reapers to a trustie seruant: yet not contented therewith, in his own person he commeth to the worke. And surely, this diligence of Lords and maisters, causeth faithfull labourers and seruauntes: as the idlenes and negligence of the one causeth the vnfaithfulnesse and slacknes of the other, for whiles the maisters followe their worldly pleasures, the seruants omit their carefull busines. Therefore wee may reade in the building of the first & second temple, there were ouerseers of the worke, beside the ordinary labourers; and often times would king Salomon and Nechemiah come in their owne persons to viewe the workes. The like may we reade of *Elisehs* host, which was abroad in the field with his reapers, when his little sonne fel sicke, in-
2. Kin. 5. 16
 somuch as this seemed a point of necessitie, that euery one, whom the Lord hath made a maister of possessions, although he labour not, yet muste hee certifie
2. Kin. 4. 18
 himselfe

himselfe, of his labourers diligence, with his owne eye sight, which condemneth many inferiour maisters, of negligent slouthfulnes, and idle negligence, in not regarding their worldly talents giuen them of God, but referring the disposition to their stewards and seruants, refuse in their own persons to deale with Gods benefits, as too base things for their occupations; which is the cause that so many maisters fall to be seruants, and to many seruants ascend to be maisters: their wealth is quickly consumed, & these which would not be their own seruants to keep themselves in labour & wealth, come to be other mens slaues in drudgery or beggerie, eyther in themselves or their posterity, as the iust iudgment of God: for he that would not vse his talent had it taken from him. Therefore seeing this ancient nobilitie were imploied in their own busines, let not the new & suddaine vpstart wealthy men among vs, disdain at poore laboring persons, or thinke it any disgrace to do as their fathers did, faithfully to labour in the meanest vocation. Secondly, after Boaz came to the field, he saluteth the reapers & saith, *The Lord be with you*, & they answered. *The Lord blesse thee*: where wee see the first thing he doth, he prayeth for the labourers, in this his godly salutation, for he wisheth the presence of God to be with them, which is his fauour, for his presence signifieth his fauour and blessing, as absence betokeneth his iudgments and cursings. This we may see in the dedication of the temple by Salomon, the glorie of the Lord so filled it, that y^e priests were not able to sacrifice in it, & the angel saluteth Mary the mother of christ wth the selfe same words, *The Lord be with thee*: wherein he signified the wonderfull fauor of God vnto her which shold be the mother of the Messiah. And on the contrary, the absence of the Lord is the heauy wrath of his maiesty, as appeareth by that complaint of Dauid, Wil the Lord absent himselfe for euer, or hath he forgotten to be mercifull; and Paule saith that the wicked are seperated with euerlasting destruction from the glory & presence of God. By the which we learne how reuerently we must vse our salutations, least when we wish the fauour of the Lord to bee present with others, his mercy

1. Kin. 8. 11

Luc. 1. 28.

Psa. 77. 7.

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through our vnaduised praier be absent frō our selues: for how lamentable is it, to heare in many places, with one breath praierers to be powred out for other, and bitter blasphemies against the maiestic of God, with wo-
Iam. 3. 7. 1
 full curses to the death of their soules? May wee gather any comfort by these salutations, when men in derision passing by other shall vse the salutation of Boaz, other wishing they know not what, do as well by their ignorant gteetings pray for their owne destruction, as their neighbours prosperitie? such precious balmes let them not come vpon the heads of the righteous, for this is as certaine as the world shall haue an ende, that all their supplications either at morning, noone, or euen-
 ing, are but mere customarie speeches, proceeding of the vse & manner of men, not of the spirit or religion of the faithfull. Yet let it not grieue vs to vse this language of Canaan, the phrased of the scripture, in our ciuill and godly comunication: and though all the world cry out, puritanisme, puritanisme, yet blessed is hee that is not offended at Christ. Let the Samaritans worship in their mountaines, but wee will worship at Ierusalem in spirit & in truth: and let vs vse, in despight of the world, & weightie words of God his spirit, that they may be our owne mother speech, we the children of the Church, & the heires of saluation. But in this it is noted, to be the dutie of all men to salute them whome they meete, to pray for the successe of laborers and workmen. For well we must remember, that except the Lord doe build the house, the builders build but in vaine, and except the Lord doe giue the victorie, what though millions of horses be prepared for y battell? surely it is in vain to rise early and to goe late to bed & eate the bread of careful-
Psa. 12. 7. 1
 nes, to labour hard, & cōpasse the world by a thousand deuises, except their owne praier, and the prayers of the faithfull, appeare in the presence of the eternal for them. And this noteth the carnal constitutions of many mens hearts among vs, which rashly enterprise their workes without calling on the Lord, & vnprofitably end them to their owne destruction. Oh how it griueth God his Saintes, dayly to heare his name abused by swearing,

cuen among them that husband the earth. They crye out on their seruants morning and euening, abroad, abroad, to worke to the field: but who sayth, come let vs first fall downe together and humble our selues in the presence of God, and call for a blessing vpon our labours, or say thus much, The Lord bee with vs; no, no, that will hinder their daies worke, they hire their seruants to labour, and not to pray. Therefore the Prophet saith, You sowe much, but you bring but little in, you eate, but you are not filled, you drinke, and are not satisfied, you cloath your selues, but you are not warmed, and hee that receiueth wages, putteth it into a broken bag: therefore thus saith the Lord, Harken vnto my waies, This is the plague vpon vs that mind our wealth, and not the welfare of God his Church, therefore wee labour like slaues, but others receiue the benefite by vs: we imagine the earth bringeth forth of it selfe, children are borne by nature, the cloudes must needes raine, and our fruites must needes increase: thus wee make many Gods, while wee ascribe the power of God to his creatures. But bee not so rude as brute beastes, the dogge will craue his meate at the hands of his master: more accursed are they which pray not for a blessing at y^e hands of God the father.

Thirdly, by this salutation of Boaz, wee obserue the dutie of elder persons or superiors, which is, first to salute or speake to their inferiors, as masters to seruants, magistrates to subiectes, and pastours to their people: yet against this, in outward behauiour wee haue many and dayly offences, for you shall haue Gentlemen and yeomen which will hardly speake to a poore man, being asked a question by him, much lesse when they meet him will they giue any curteous or friendly greeting. But heere we see Boaz, though honorable, yet humble, saluteth his poore and hired reapers, who condemneth ten thousand that are contrarie minded, for proud and surly persons. Olde Eli would speake to young Samuel, a little boy: though hee were the high priest, yet hee scorned not so gentle a childe: what then shall become of this stately person, which being saluted, will not salute

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late againe, as if euery worde were gold that commeth from them, so sparing are they to speake to a poore or a simple man, whereas with their betters, their tongues are too bigge for their mouthes, whome they wearie with their vnprofitable bablings. This kind of euil spirite will not be cast out till the heart be humbled, pride abated, sorrow for sinne increased, and the whole man perfectly regenerated, for by thy words thou shalt be iustified, and by thy wordes thou shalt be condemned, for an humble hart will shew it with meeknes, but a proude heart will looke strangely.

Fourthly, as Boaz praied for the reapers, so the reapers returned to him, and saide, *The Lord blesse thee.* Where wee see a mutuall salutation much commended, for as hee saluted, so was hee saluted, like to the Queene of Shebah, which giueth princely gifts to king Salomon, and Salomon gaue royall rewardes to her againe: so that inferiours are bound, by the same lawe with as kinde affection to pray for other, as they themselves were first entreated: for this too much shamefastnes in many is worthy blame, because it doth not onely couer the countenance, but also couer the tongue, leauing them speechles, when they are to aunswere, their superiours: but as these labouring reapers vse Boaz, so also must wee any of our betters: which is with reuerence to speake our mindes, and godlines to praye for their welfare: and therefore we must put on the spirite of meekenes, and euery one esteeme better of another then of our selues. But some wil say, there is no such necessitie of salutation as you would make it, for Elisehah sending his seruant, commaunded him to salute no man by the way, and if any saluted him, hee shoulde not answere them: likewise our sauiour Christ sending his disciples to preach, willed them not to salute any by the way: therfore it is no such signe of pride as you wold make it.

2. Kin. 4. 29

Luc. 10. 4.

To the which I aunswere, first that Elisehah sent his man in wonderfull hast, which respected the life of the Shunamites son, therefore he willeth him to admit no let or hindrance in his iourney, but with all speed to go forward,

forward, inſomuch as hee ſhould not doo the common curteſie to ſtrangers either in ſalutation or in anſwere: ~~Euen~~ ſo meaneth our ſanior that his diſciples being haſtilie ſent, as it were, to gather the harueſt of the Lorde, might admit no delay either in neceſſarie or vnnecellarie buſineſſe. And this teacheth vs that the labour of preaching excelleth all earthly duties, yea, that all other muſt ſerue to it as handmaidens and ſeruaunts, to further the courſe, and not hinder the proceedings. Therefore this muſt remaine inuiolable, as grounded on the lawe of God and men, that curteous and godly ſalutations are verie commendable.

Then Boaz. Now in theſe three verſes following inſueth the communication had with his ſeruaunt, who Ruth was: vnto which his ſeruant telleth or anſwereth in the 6. and 7. verſes. Firſt, that it is Ruth which came with Naomi from the countrie of Moab: ſecondly, that ſhee asked him leaue to gather among the ſheaves: thirdly, that ſhe came but that morning, and had continued till that inſtant. Where wee ſee the carefulneſſe of Boaz in doing good, would know the perſons whether they were worthie or not: and the faithfullneſſe of the ſeruant, which ſo plainly declared the truth to his maſter. And this is the pure meaning of the wordes: other doctrines can none be drawne from hence, and therefore let vs giue praiſe to God for that which hath bene ſpoken.

The end of the ſiſt Lecture.



The sixt Lecture.

Chap. 2. verse, 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14.

- 8 Then said Boaz to Ruth, Hearest thou my daughter, go to none other field to gather, neither go from hence, but abide here by my masdems.
- 9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reape, and goe after the masdems: Haue I not charged the seruantes that they touch thee not? Moreover, when thou art thirstie, go vnto the Vessels and drinke of that which the seruants haue drawn.
- 10 Then shee fell on her face, and bowed herselfe to the ground, and said vnto him, Howe haue I found fauour in thy eyes, that thou shouldest know me, since I am a stranger.
- 11 And Boaz, answered and said vnto her, All is tolde, & shewed me that thou hast done vnto thy mother in law, since the death of thy husband, and how thou hast lefte thy father and mother, and the land where thou wast borne, and art come vnto a people which thou knewest not in times past.
- 12 The Lord recompence thy worke, and a full reward beo giuen thee of the Lord God of Israel, vnder whose wings thou art come to trust.
- 13 Then she said, Let me find fauour in thy sight, my Lord, for thou hast comforted me, & spoken to the hart of thy handmaid, yet I shall not be like to one of thy masdes.
- 14 And Boaz, said vnto her, At meale time come thou hither, and eate of the bread, and dippe thy morsell in the Vineger: and she sate beside the reapers, &c.



IN these wordes the holy Ghost declareth the communication which Boaz had with Ruth: for so soone as he vnderstood who she was, he turneth his speech from the man to the woman. This conference, according to the number of the persons, hath two partes. The first is of Boaz, and the seconde of Ruth, The firste parte which respecteth Boaz, is

is the singular curtesie he offereth to Ruth, ver. 8. 9. 14. Wherin first he biddeth her to glean freely among his maidens, not onely in that fiede, but also wheresoeuer the reapers bestowe themselues: secondly he commandeth his seruants that they doe her no iniury, but giue her drinke when she is thirstie, and himselfe called her to meate, and gaue her so liberally, that she being sufficed, left for her mother.

The other part which concerneth Ruth, is her manner of behauiour to this courteous intertainment of Boaz, wherein first shee boweth her selfe to the ground, verse 10. secondly, shee confesseth the greatnesse of his kindnes in the same verse, because shee was a stranger, and her vnworthinesse of any benefit, vers. 13. because shee should bee as one of his maidens. For this speech of Ruth, Boaz sheweth the cause of all his curtesie, ver. 11. because shee had dealt so well with her mother in lawe, and had forsaken country and kindred to come to the people of God, therefore she deserued to bee honourably intreated: secondly, he prayeth for her, ver. 12 that the Lord would not frustrate his promise, deceiue her hope, but recompence her labour, and shield her with his wings. Of these partes let vs speake in order, as the spirite shall giue vtterance, and the time permit.

Then said Boaz. So soone as hee vnderstoode who that woman was, whereof hee had demaunded his seruant, hee turneth his speech vnto her, that so soone as might be he might comfort her afflicted pouerty, and testifie any good will to a godly stranger: where first of all it is commendable, that he vouchsafeth to cal so base a person by the name of daughter, for truly this louing word bewrayeth the tender affection of a godly heart, forgetting his lofty degree, and calling an abiect stranger by the name of daughter, which proueth that hee longed to giue vnto her some comfort of kindnes. This humble and most tender title of daughter and sonne are very vsual in the scripture, for when the Lord would comfort the Church of the Iewes against the blasphemies of Senacherib & Rabsakeh, he calleth it a virgine the daughter of Sion, as if he had said, euen as a father

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is careful for the wealth of his daughter, so do I watch for the welfare of my church: in like manner Christ our sauiour comforted the women that wept at his death, Luc. 23, 28.
by the name of the daughters of Ierusalem.

Out of the which we gather this profitable doctrine, that it is one propertie and duety of an humble minde, to speake kindly where it wisheth friendly, especially, when we talke to our brethren & the professors of the same religion, our harts must be as the sweet roses, and our words as soft as butter, to supple and refresh their troubled daies. For we must not doo as many haue both in their writings & familiar speeches, comforted them with the vilest reproches, tainting tearmes, and vncharitablest titles they could inuent, that the poyson of aspes may seeme to lodge in their mouths, being by their words right deuills, they speake so cursedly: but handle them, if they bee faulty with gentle wordes, for men in authority must punishe with the swoorde of magistrates, not the wordes of slaunders: equalls by admonition, not by reuiling: inferiors by petition, not by exclamations. If wee will haue humble heartes, wee must shew them by gentle words, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: the faithfull are compared to sheepe which are meeke and silent, but the reprobate to dogs which are alwaies barking & brawling. If wee brand other with the marke of contempt, we burne our selues with the iron of an vngodly tongue: many can bee content to distribute their wealth liberally, but their scornful words disgrace their deuotion, because they taste more of wormewoode, then of the rose: and this I haue noted in many great persons, that their wordes are as kinde to their dogges as to the poore. Oh howe vnlike are they to the Lorde himself, which calleth vs sons, to this godly Boaz, which calleth Ruth his daughter, to y apostle Paul, which called the meanest in the church of God a brother. Why do you forget your selues to be the children of Adam? or rather will you not be their fellowe heys of grace, y thus raign ouer our brethren in disdainfull speeches, as though heauen were not high enough for you both
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to abide in.

Go not hence. Nowe weare come to another curtesie of Boaz, which consisteth in his commaudemēt hee giueth to Ruth, first that she should not goe into any other field to gather: secondly, that she should ioynē her selfe to his maidens: thirdly, that she should follow the reapers whether soeuer they go: that by this it seemeth the man was delighted to handle her gently. Was it not sufficiēt that he suffred her without denial or reproof, or if he gaue her leaue by name aboue many other (as no doubt but there were many in the field) but hee must admit her into the company of his own maidens: or hauing giuē her that libertie, he must also bid her to follow his reapers, whither so euer they goe? surely this was strange kindnes to a strange woman, to be intreated more like a daughter than a Moabiteesse: nay he addeth the second part of his commandement, telling her that he had charged his seruants, quietly to endure her presence, and giue her for her necessitie. Where we first of al note the heauēly example of godly liberalitie, how far it diffreth from worldly pinchpenies. They giue in gentleness, the other in pride: they in cheerfulness, the other in murmuring, they in liberalitie the other in couetousnes: and look how many degrees the moone is aboue the earth, so many the giftes of the godly surpass the carnall: the reason of this is, because the one are perswaded to what end they giue, but the other do think it to be cast into the sea. We read of the Israelites; when the tabernacle of the Lorde was to be builded, they offred so much, that Moses proclaimed they should offer no more: this heat of liberality is well cooled in this frozen age, for wee haue much ice, but little water; as the ice will afford no water till it be thawed, so men will giue nothing to the church, poore, or tabernacle of the Lord, til they be dead: now there is such struiuing to go formost in godly contributions, that euery one sitteth stil, many placke from the church, personages & profits, tiths, & sanctified offerings, but fewe adde one mite into the Lords treasury. Let the poore be famished, the gospel vnfurnished, the churches ynbuilted, the people

Exod 36.9.

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people vntaught, learning contemned, idle and ignorant persons aduanced, and many poore soules condemned for want of the bread of life: yet they say still, come let vs search for more treasure, let vs take to our selues the houses of God in possession: yea, they spare not the verie altars of the Lord, but thinke it a charge that the sacraments should bee so often administred at the cost of the parish. Oh most miserable and vngodly behauior of wicked worldlings, who (like the Lyons den) suffer all to come in, but none to come out: like the adamant which draweth all things, but casteth abroad nothing. Where is the wonted contribution, which in the primitive Church we reade? The Apostle commended the Macedonians, that they gaue beyond their power, willingly, not of constraint. Which answereth the carnall obiection of many which say, they must giue of their abundance, so if they haue not abundance, they are exempted from giuing. But the holy Ghost would exempt none, for euerie one of his abilitie is bound to giue to Church and poore, none must appeare before the Lord empty, he which had not a lambe must offer a doue, & she which had no more, gaue two mites into the Lords treasurie. The seruant for his wages, the laborer for his hire, the crafts-man for his taking, the yeoman for his profits, the gentleman for his office, the noble man for his reuenues, must euerie one giue somewhat to poore and religion: but some take from the Church one hundred poundes a yeare, and giue scant an hundred shillings: some haue more and some haue lesse, and they pray vppon vs as the Eagles on the altars, carrying with their commodities coales of fire, which shal burne both their houses and progenie, because they tooke it from the Lord.

Secondly, in this kindnesse of Boaz vnto Ruth, this is worthie to bee noted, that hee commaundeth his seruantes to offer her no wrong: for to touch, is to iniurie in many places of Scripture, as when the Lorde speaketh by the Prophet Dauid, Touch not Psa. 105. 15
myne annoynted, neyther doo my Prophettes anye Zach. 28,
harme. That is, neyther doo you hurt my Prophettes,

or

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or annointed . And againe by the Prophet Zacharie,
Hee that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye,
 that is, which hurteth you, harmeth the tenderest place
 of all his owne bodie: euen so doth Boaz take it in this
 place. For well knew that good man that her simplici-
 tie would bee quickly abused by the rigour of his ser-
 uants, and wee knowe it hath beene and also is a com-
 mon plague to most of the godly, euill and discourteous
 seruants, as appeareth in the historie of Abraham and
 Lot, and verie often the masters which are well affect-
 ed in religion, are abused by their seruants, in their
 friends. If they bee worshipfull, then the seruants will
 churlishly intertaine those godly persons which resorte
 to their masters houses: if they bee higher, they will
 scorne them, if baser, they will enuie them: this mis-
 chiefe had godly Ioseph noted when hee commaunded
 his seruants to vse his brethren so kindly: and Dauid
 by a seruant was whetted on to bee reuenged vppon
 Saul. Therefore right worshipfull, and yet our brethren
 in Christ, as you are carefull in your owne persons to do
 good to the godly, euen so followeth this Boaz, in com-
 maunding your selues to deale friendly also. I knowe
 you shall neuer chooseth all your seruants of your owne
 disposition, yet if you often warne them, you maye
 chance to winne them, for the beginning of religion is
 the loue of them that professe it, euen as hunger in a
 sicke person is a token of recouerie. Then shall you
 cheerefully receiue Christ into your houses in his poore
 members, and ioyfully assure your consciences, you
 haue vnfaignedly loued him, for hee which hath giuen
 his Angels charge ouer vs, willeth also that wee should
 giue our seruantes charge ouer our brethren: the vn-
 kindnesse which many poore soules haue receiued at
 the handes of your churlish and stubborne seruantes,
 hath discomforted them more then all your liberalitie
 hath comforted them. What accesse coulde the little
 children haue to Christ whē the disciples forbad them:
 euen so, how shall we repaire to your dwellings, when
 your owne seruants, so much as in them lyeth, disvayne
 vs of your houses, keepe vs from your presence, enuie
 our

Gen. 13. 7.

Gen. 42. 25.

1. Sam. 24.

35.

Mar. 10. 13.

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our meetings and deride our profession:

Wherefore she fell. This vertie concerneth Ruth, and her answere to those words of Boaz: first her gesture is described, that she fel vpon the earth, & bowed herself to the ground, that is, with all shewe of humilitie: secondly, she commendeth this his kind curtesie, because she was a stranger: so that by outward behauiour, shee gratifieth his gentlenes, and exalteth his liberallity toward her, by the consideratiō of her own person which was a stranger, & therefore vnworthy of so great kindness.

Out of the which we chiefly obserue, first, that it is a duety of the poorer sort, not onely to acknowledge their thankfulness by woordes, but also to testifie it by outward submission: for Abraham himselfe vsed it euen to the idolatrous Hittites, whē they gaue him leaue to bury his dead, twise together. This noteth a greater thankfulness then all the wordes of the worlde: in so much as it is accounted a speciall duetye belonging to superiours, as wee may see in Bathshebah to her husband, when shee came to tell him how Adoniah reigned, and likewise in king Salomon towards her, when she came to aske Abisag. Now, if these stately persons bowed themselves, but in curtesie, much more ought wee of duety. Then is heere condemned, the vnciuill behauiour of many stout personnes, which are so farre from bowing, that they will hardly thanke their brethren for their liberalities, accounting it their duety, as they say, to giue: as if also it were not their duety to be thankfull. The knowne example of the ten leapers, doeth much commend this kind of thankfull behauiour, and also condemne the ingratefull affection. Other there bee that are in such loue, with this eap and knee, that it doth them more good to see the poore people bende vnto them, then they reioyce that they haue giuen for Christes sake, insomuch as they giue, that themselves and not the Lord might bee honoured.

This lacke of reuerence in the one, and loue of honour in the other, are both vnlawfull, because they

Gen. 23. 7.

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1. Kin. 1. 16

1. Kin. 2. 19

Hest. 3. 2.

Exo. 17. 41.

Deu. 25. 17

1. Sam. 15. 9

they both proceed from one roote, which is the pride of our owne heartes, and the conceite of our owne persons. But some will say, wee doe but as that godly Mordecai did, which refused to honour the wicked Haman, so wee abstaine from doing reuerence to the proude and vaine glorious, because wee will not feede their disposition. Vnto whom I answere, that there were manye causes for which Mordecai refused to bend vnto Hamon, which they can neuer alledge for themselues: the first, because he was a wicked Amalekite, of a nation whome the Lorde commanded the Iewes vtterly to destroy, neither to spare man, woman or childe, as appeareth in the history of Saul, who because he transgressed this commandement of God in sauing Agag their King and certaine oxen to sacrifice, it cost him his kingdome and displeasure of God. Because of this lawe of the Lorde, Mordecai would do no honour to this childe of destruction, and was blameles.

Secondly, it is thought that the honour which Haman obtained, was proper onely to God, because hee was aduanced aboue all other: and such kind of reuerence we must alway beware of, for Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego, had rather dye then fall downe before the image of the King of Babylon: euen so wee must not giue more to man then is his owne, but vnto Cæsar the thinges which are Cæsars, and vnto God the thinges which are Gods. And if any for these causes defend their stately behauiour, let them consider that the Lord bids vs not to destroy, but rather to loue our enemyes. And though they require such worship as is due onely to God, yet we must not refuse to giue them that which belongeth to man. Other can be content to honour them whom they knowe to bee godly, but the wicked they thinke vnworthy of all reuerence, because our sauour would doe none to Herod or Pilate, Paul to the high Priest, when hee called him painted wall.

To whome I answere, that Christ (though he called Herodea foxe, and would do no miracle before him,

be

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because hee desired but to wander, and not to glorifie God by it.) Yet gaue to Herode that dutie which pertained vnto him, Likewise vnto Pilate, when he tolde him, his power came of the Lorde: so Paule did reuerence, not onely the high priest, but also Felix, Festus, & Agrippa, who were heathen men, though magistrats, and therefore were honourable by the Lawe of God. So then this must remaine for a grounded truth, that our betters must be honoured as men, not worshipped as God: wee must with Abraham bende as wel to the idolatrous Hebron, as with Bathshebah to godly Dauid: if they receiue more then they are worthy, it is not our default, but their danger, let vs giue to the prophaneest person his right, and vngodliest caytife that which is his owne.

Secondly, by this wee note, that the godlye in giuing must haue no respect of persons, countrey or kindred, strangers, or neighbours children, as Boaz did heere Ruth, who by her owne confession was a stranger, and therefore vnworthy: but wee shewed you this in the first chapter by the example of the Moabits, so Elimelech and his familie, to bee a thinge incident to very naturall men, and by them condemned that vse it not, much more in them that haue knowne the truth. The which Abraham did to the angels, where ad. 9. vpon the Apostle wisheth, to keepe hospitalitie, Heb. 13. 2. for so some haue receiued angells, in steede of men, Exod. 22. 27 The Lorde commaunded very sharpslye, that no violence bee done to strangers, neither yet that any should oppress them. Leui. 19. 33

Whereby the vngodly entreating of straungers, that manye wishe for amonge vs is too wicked; enuiing that any shoulde bee permitted to come and so iourne among vs, like free borne children: Yet heere in wee are to praise God, that these persons cannot bite, although they barke at poore harbourlesse straungers, and also that he hath blessed our magistrats with more pittifull mindes: And let these persons knowe and consider, that it is as easie to goe out as to come into Englande, that is, they may as

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Some be driuen to other places out of their owne countrey, to be strangers there, as these are, repayed for succour hither. The vncertaintie of worldly estate, that hath brought great princes to extreme pouerty, should bridle their churlishe and vngodly affections, from offering one thought of iniurie to these poore harbourlesse strangers. We knowe the parable of Christ, of a man that trauailed from Iericho to Ierusalem, and fell among theeues: the kindnes of that stranger Samaritan, should moue vs to doe good to strangers while the world standeth, seeing we are more helped by their presence, then by our owne neighbours: but these kind persons that thus rayle vppon poore stran-

Deu. 23. 20

gers, are such as are grieued against God and mē, who in their hearts would haue no man liuing in the land, beside themselues and their cursed posteritye. But some will saye, you make too much account of strangers, the Lord doeth not make suche reckoning of them, because, forbidding vsury to the Iewes, yet hee permitted them to take vsurye of the strangers. I answer, those strangers were the cursed Cananites and none other, whome God had vowed to destruction: to the intent the Iewes might haue them in all slaverye. Of them he permitted to take vsury: for this is the blessing of God vppon that people, that they should be able to lend to other, but stand in no need to borrow of other. Therefore that beeing but a permission for the Iewes onely, hath ceased in that common wealth: but in Christ there is no difference of Iewe or gentile, male or female, bond or free, for all are his and hee the Lordes: so that now the name of a straunger is quite ceased, but all are neighbors and brethren for euermore.

Deu. 23. 19

And Boaz answered. In this verse is contained the replie of Boaz vnto the speeche of Ruth, wherein is set downe the true cause of his liberallity vnto her first in regarde of her mother in lawe and his kinswoman, with whome shee had dealt so well in her owne countrey; secondly, in regard of her selfe, she had forsaken father and mother with countrey and kindred

dred, to come among strange people.

Where wee first obserue, a singular encouragment to obey our godly parentes, for wee see that our good actions neede not to bee preached abroad by other for our farther comendation, but at the time appointed, they will shewe themselues, as the life of trees by sending forth leaues in the spring time of the yeere. Ruth, as wee haue heard, dealt most louingly with her mother in lawe in Moab, yet you see that her kindnes hath followed her to Bethlehem in Iudah, many myles distant the one from the other. If it had bene knowne there to a few onely, it had bin sufficient: but being spread abroad, the chiefe man in a City doth commend her for it, among a multitude in a haruest field, the place could not hide it were it neuer so far of, the time not conceale it, be it neuer so secret: the commendation of it be couered, because shee was a stranger, nor the credit of it bee losse in another countrey. Such is the nature of good things which we do to other, that no obliuion can euer bury it. What needeth this boasting of our almes deedes, like the blowing of a trumpet? this bragging of our worthines? some of their manhood, some of their friendship, other of their riches, and many of their labour: as if they slept not soundly til al the world did ring of their commendation. This one thing loseth all our reward, for it is better that the workes then the wordes should witnes it. Wee may also by this assure our selues, that we haue done nothing so secretly to the flocke of Christ, but it is knowne, and the name of God praised for it: for as euill deedes remaine to the graue, so good workes redound to perpetuall memory. Act. 14. 13

Secondlye, by this wee obserue the excellencie of religion, for whose sake it is commendable to forgette nature, and praise worthy to forsake our parents and people. Which, if we should doo for any other cause whatsoeuer, we were accursed.

When the Lorde would establishe his couenant with Abraham, hee called him from Father and

Gen. 12. 1.

Euit. 7. 44.

Act. 5. 41.

country, to shewe that for religion sake it is a glorye, and not onely to do thus, but also for to bee scourged, yea, and to suffer death.

Rom. 9. 27

Why then is it so contumeliously vpbraid; so scornefully refused of many; and but of fewe receyued till this day? Amonge all the world, onely Abrahams posteritie had the covenant and promises; and now though men bee as the sande on the sea shoare, and the starres of heauen, which cannot be numbered, yett shall but a remnant bee saued; none come vnto it but by the especiall grace of God, whereby hee draweth them, as it were, against their mindes: fewe persons would so resort to Noahs arke, because they scorned his preaching: euen so fewe are religious, because they account it a base worke to heare the worde of God plainly opened, and sincerely expounded. Where is then become this auncient zeale, that made men and women, as well noble as base, to bee obedient to the calling of the Lord, for which cause they forsook both wealth, parentage, cuntry, & kindred? but in these daies men will forsake Christe, and his Gospell, religion and preaching for the least of these. Once the Apostle saide hee accounted all thinges as dung in regarde of Christe, but now Christ is regarded as dung in comparison of the worlde. Once Christe sayde, whosoever loueth father or mother, wife or children, house or landes more then mee, is not worthy of mee, but nowe whosoever loueth Christe more then these, is not worthy to liue.

Once it was sayde, first seeke the kingdome of God and the righteousnesse thereof, and all other thinges shall be cast vppon you: but now, first seeke the worldes riches and wealth, and religion will followe too soone. Oh what miserable daies are we fallen into, where ignorance aduanceth it selfe like the moone, and is not ashamed, the Gospell reuiled by euerie atheist, the ministers molested of euery papiste, the sacramentes prophaned, the professours scarned by slanderous titles, which for Christes sake

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haue lost their kinred and aduentured their liues. Surely, surely, some great plague is 'approaching, for the quenching of this burning heate of sinne, when they shall say, there is a God that rewardeth the righteous, verely there is a God that iudgeth the worlde.

Thirldy we obserue out of this verse, that we must not without consideration giue liberally to all, but with speciall fauour do good to the godly: for you see Boaz telleth this second cause of her forsaking both countrey and kinred, as if he were bound to do for such, as for his owne children, thereby signifiing that if wee haue neuer so much to giue, yet we can neuer giue innough to the saints of God: This our sauour signifieth when he saith, There were many widowes in Israel in the dayes of Eliab, yet to none was hee sent but to Sarephthah, a cittie of Zidon, to a woman a widdow: as if hee had said, as God with speciall kindnes releued her in 4. three yeeres famine, euen so must we with the like fauours succour the godly and labouring poore. Therefore when Paule biddeth do good vnto all, he addeth, especially to the household of faith.

Luc. 4. 26:
27.

Gal. 6. 10.

This is profitable for our dayes, that wee might also learne to whome we may giue, for now our land is full of wandring and roaguing beggers, who as their life is most base, yet their maners are farre worse: first they worke not at all, but are idle, and hee that worketh not must not eat, because he walketh inordinately: secondly, they are for the most part, vtterly void of all feare of God, atheists, ignorant persons, blasphemers, prophaners of Sabbaothes, disobedient to Maiestrates and maisters, common whoremaisters and whores, hauing almost euery weeke new husbands and wiues thecues and such drones as sucke away the almes from poore laboring persones. They will pray at euery doore for any simple reliefe, with their hattes on their heades most vnreuerent, but if any man appeare before them they will presently breake off their prayers, and vncouer their heades, esteeming more of the presence of a seely man or woman, then

of the maiestie of the eternall God : if they bee not satisfied they will curse more vehementlye, then before they prayed earnestly. Those are the peore which get our almes: but for other I heare of few, for I speake nothing but that which I haue heard and seene with my owne eyes. And to speake nothing of their changing of their voyce, their counterfaiting sores, and their common drunkennesse: I thinke I may euery way conclude, they are the Caterpillers of our countrey, the Canaanits of our common wealth, the vngodliest and vnprofitablest members among vs.

For whome I haue two sutes, the one to the magistrats, that so often as they finde such persons, they would duely execute the lawe vppon them, that the other may beware: and my other to the people, that they would bee deafe at their cryes, and shut vp their compassions from them, and bestowe it vppon the poore labourers among vs, to encourage them wyth patience to endure their trauailes, and to discourage the other from this kind of wicked life. Whatsoeuer you giue them is but seede cast into the sea, whereof shall come neuer any profit: but those that are of the house of the Lord let vs wish them prosperity.

The Lord recompense. This is the second parte of this repleye of Bohaz, which is his prayer for Ruth: whetein as we shewed you, are deliuered two thinges: first that the Lorde would giue her some reward: secondly, he comforteth her, in that hee telleth her, shee is come to trust vnder the wings of God. Where first of all heere seemeth some holde for popish merites, seeing he prayeth for a recompense and perfect reward. Therefore it may be probably gathered, wil they say, from hence, that workes after faith merite grace: for heere I cannot conceale the subtilty of our English papists which they learned from the Romish Seminarie, being asked whither workes merite, they answered no, meaning those workes which goe before sayth, whereas they euery one dooe confidently beleue that workes after faith doo merite eternall life. Thus they blinde our eyes wyth the schoole distinction
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of workes before faith, and after faith, that they might the better couer their sophistry, but we (praised be God for it) most confidently affirme, that no workes cyther before or after faith, do concur in the matter or cause of iustification. As for workes before faith, we acknowledge they are sinne; for whatsoeuer is, not of faith is sinne: and for workes after faith, we constantly belceue with Paul, that our saluation commeth not by them. But let vs come to this scripture, and continue a little with our saluation workers. Wee grant Bohaz prayeth for a reward: What then? therefore workes cyther merite, or he prayeth amisse: both which wee denie, and will confirme by this scripture. First did Bohaz thinke that Ruth had merited by this forsaking of her countrey? I answere no: why then doth he pray for her? if she had deserued it, God is not vniust, but hee that commandeth that the hyre of a labourer shoulde not be kept backe one night, would not, or needed not to be intreated for that which he must of necessitie performe. By the which we see, that the praier of Bohaz the merite of Ruth, & the iustice of God, cannot stand together.

Secondly for what cause doth hee praye for a recompense? Was it not because shee had forsaken her owne idolatrous people, to come to the Lordes common wealth? yes verily it was so. Then was it of faith or of workes? no work assuredly, but faith; for faith caused Moyse when hee was growen vp, to forsake the courte of Pharao, and to ioyne himselfe with God his afflicted people: Faith caused Abraham to come into the land of promise, from his owne idolatrous countrey: and this same faith caused Ruth to come from the Countrey of Moab to the people of the Iewes, and therefore Bohaz addeth, that shee was come to trust vnder the wings of God, but confidence proceedeth of faith, and not of workes. Therefore to conclude, Bohaz prayeth for such a rewarde, as God had promised to all the faithfull: for as the sunne looketh vpon the earth, and the earth looketh vpon the sunne againe, so faith respecteth the promise of God, and the promise of

Ioh. 3. 18.

of God regardeth faith: because it is written, whosoever beleeueth in me hath euerslasting life, but whosoever beleeueth not (though he purchase lands for Catholickes build Churches, ordaine chauntries and go neuer so farre on pilgrimage) yet is he condemned already. But now they will renew their wonted outcry saying, We reach for faith, we condemne works, we driue men to a wicked life, and tell them all is well, if they beleeue wel: we condemn, say they, housekeeping, giuing to the poore, with builders of Colledges, and Churches, and founders of hospitals with all charitable actions. but these are great thunderclapes, but yet without raine. I aske the resoluteest Papist liuing, whether euer he read any of these, in all the writings of the protestants, once mentioned wthout singular commendation: for I am sure none of you y^e are resolute papists, wil come to the churches, to heare our preachers speak against the yet you cry out, beleeue them not, they broche heresies this is brought vnto you, by your pensioner hangbies, and luke warme professors, papisticall Atheists which come to our Churches to sleep, and there dreame, who being come vnto you, make you beleeue that their dreames were the preachers sermons, and you that are apt to beleeue lies, beleeue liars. But to come to the purpose, you accuse vs for condemning good workes, when we attribute no merits vnto them: this we deny, for the reason is like this: None will become a papist, but he that hopeth to bee pope: so none will do good workes but he that hopeth to be saued or crowned by them. If they grant the latter, then they must giue the former: Which I am assured many honest minded papists would not bee, though they might haue as much as the popes father, the Deuill offered Christ, which was all the world. Therefore as a papist is not a papist because he would be a Pope, so good woorkes must not be done, that men might be crowned by them. Euery Catholicke which beleeueth as the Church beleeueth, must not presently steppe into Peters chayre: no more euery one that doth a good worke, must by that ascend vp into hea-

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uen. Good workes haue another vse then to iustifie. Because the eye cannot smell, shall it therefore bee puld out? noe, it was created to see and not to smell; because good works iustifie not, shall no man do them, God forbid, they were giuen to the faithfull, for outward testimonies of faith, and of God his spirite, that by them that they might assure themselves and others to be sanctified and elected: not that they should help in their saluation. As the tree dyeth without the barke; and fire is nothing without heate, so workes without faith, and faith without workes, is cursed and vnprofitable.

Therefore wee say, let every one that calleth on the name of Christ, depart from iniquitie, eschewe euill, and doe good, feede the hungry, cloath the naked, visite the sicke and imprisoned, harbour the harbourles, prouide for children and widowes, yea and builde Churches and Colledges for the maintenance of Gods worship and learning. Yet we say, we are iustified by faith, wee haue peace with God through our Lord Iesus Christ, by whome we were brought to this grace, through which we stand, & glory vnder the hope of the glory of God: for al the works in the worlde cannot satisfie for one sin, because there is none other name vnder heauen by which wee may bee saued, but onely by the name of Christ.

Out of this, first wee gather the goodnesse of God, which of his owne promise and owne mercie, accepteth that little obedience of faith, which wee offer vnto him. What can we doe to the fulfilling of the law? if we kept all and yet failed in one, wee had lost all our labour: but if we kept one point onely, and faulted in the rest, it were like to a man that was bounde to pay ten thousand pounce, and shoulde offer a shilling: but we keepe none, and yet hee accepteth vs in the death of his sonne, that our righteousness might abounde to euerlasting life. Nowe, the vse of the mercy of God is, that heerby wee shoulde bee made more fearefull and carefull not to offende him: not as some imagine, that hereby is giuen the greater liberty

Rom. 5. 1.

2. 3.

Rom. 5. 21.

to

Esay. 24. 18

to sinne, because the Lorde speaketh peace vnto vs in his beloued Christ : for this is, as the prophet speaketh, being escaped out of a ditch to fall into a snare, and as a man which is drawne out of a riuer, should cast himselfe into the sea. But the regenerate muste bee more affraide to offend the mercy of God, then the vnregenerate at his threatening iudgements. They will not sinne, because they loue God, the other will abstaine for feare of punishment : the promises of the Gospell terrifie them more then all the terrors of the Lawe: for they finde a sweeter comforte in the presence of the spirit, then to rest in all the gardens of pleasure, when they finde access to the throne of grace, through the blood of Christ, and by him all their infirmities couered, their petitions graunted, their sinnes remitted, & they at peace with God : lyke ioyfull men discharged from euerlasting imprisonment, they walke in holynes and righteousness before him all the daies of their life. Oh that these mercies wold sinke deeper in to our hard harts, that y force of the cogitation of the blood of Christ might both soften and mollifie, purge and cleanse them from wauering and doubting, wantonnes and presumption, and prepare our fallow grounds fit to receiue the Lords owne seed, his euerlasting word which is able to saue our soules.

Secondly by this when he saith, vnder whose wings thou art come to trust : the dignity of the faithfull is commended vnto vs, for they liue vnder the wings of the Lorde. Which is a Metaphor or borrowed speech, comparing him to a hen which couereth her chickens with her wings, shewing vnto vs that then wee are in safety, when wee are couered with the wings of the Lord. This our sauour noted when hee saide, that hee woulde haue gathered the City of Ierusalem, as a henne gathereth her chickens. This dignity of the faithfull is by many such speeches manifested in the scripture, wherein the Lorde sheweth vs the care hee hath for our safety, when he calleth vs the apple of his eye. He sheweth his loue, when he calleth vs his childre, his brethren and spouse, to teach vs our duties : he cal-

Mat. 23. 37.

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leth vs the braunches of a vine, which are good for nothing but to bring forth grapes: euen so are the godly pleased with nothing which they doe, saue onely the worshippe of God. This consisteth in the holy fellowship which the faithfull haue with God, which Dauid saith, bringeth life for euermore, with whome is a wel of life, and the fulnes of all ioy. And in another place the Lord saith. Behold I stand at the dore and knocke, if any man open, I will come in, and suppe with him, and he with me: and Iohn saith, He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the father & the Son. Here is the comfort of the spirit that dwelleth in vs, the assurance of faith which ouercommeth all the worlde, the euidence of our saluation, euen the confession of the Gospell with the mouth, and the beleueing in the hart, the hearing of it when it is preached, and praying in the assemblies of the faithfull; for wheresoeuer are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the middest of them, saith the Lord: for he dwelleth among his saintes, the Arke is with his ministers, the couenaunt or tabernacle of presence with them that feare him for euermore. Oh, who will not be drawne to be the member of Christes owne bodie, the heauenly Temple for the holy Ghost to dwell in, the sincere professor of true religion, that they may haue both the Father and the Sonne. Who wil not open to the Lords knocking, that hee may receiue the king of glory for his guest? Finally, who would not forsake the shadow of all the trees in the world, to bee couered vnder the winges of the Lords presence? Where is more comfort to be found but one day, then a thousande yceres in all the thrones of maiesty?

2. Iohn. 9.

1. Ioh. 3. 24.

Thirdly and lastly, by those wordes, as is noted the dignity of the faithfull, so on the contrary it vttereth the desperate and comfortles estate of the wicked, namely, they are like vncovered birds also, but neuer are shielded with the wings of the Lord: they lie open and scattered, subiect to all the foules of the ayre, euery minute in danger to be torn in peeces by the hellish, & infernal deuils,

There

Therefore Dauid saith, howsoeuer they bee nobles,
 Psal. 73. 18. and Princes of the earth, and haue houses and posses-
 19. sions, after their owne names, yet they stande but in slip-
 pery places, so soone as they mooue, they fall, Our Sa-
 uiour saith. They are like a man hauing no wedding
 Mat. 22. 13 garment: so soone as the King espieth him, hee is callt
 Ephes. 4. 18 into vtter darkenesse. Paule saith, they are strangers
 from the life of God, so that being liuing, yet they are
 but condemned persons, which euery houre, looke for
 the tormentor, then to bee burned in euerlasting fire.
 Oh fearefull estate of all Atheistes, papists, idolaters,
 Iewes, Turkes and Pagans, carnall men and hypocrits
 despisers of the ministerie & Gospel Iof Christ; who as
 in this worlde they are without God, so in the world to
 come, shal be seperated from his presence with the De-
 uill and his Angels. Looke on your reckonings, you
 guiltie consciences, which euery day adde thousandes
 to your former iniquities. The greater your debte
 is, the sharper shall bee your imprisonment. The
 oftner you are warned, the more shall bee your stripes
 As none were saued but those that entred into the
 arke, so not one of you shall euer see the face of God,
 (except at your condemnation) vnlesse you become
 zealous professors, and heare our sermons, bee parta-
 kers of our prayers, and as obedient to the voice of the
 Gospell in the mouth of his ministers, as if there were
 a law of present death, to be executed on you for euery
 default.

I finde fauour. This is the seconde part of the speech
 of Ruth, wherein she thanketh Boaz, and excuseth her
 selfe. She thanketh in the first wordes when she saith:
I finde fauour in thine eyes, ob my Lord, because thou hast
comforted me, and hast spoken those thinges which are to
the heart of thy handmaide. For shee confesseth his
 curtesie: and thankfulness, by the verditte of the learned,
 is the humble confession of a benefite. Shee excuseth,
 when she saith, *I shall not be as one of thy maydens.* As if
 she had saide, I am vnworthy of this curtesie, because
 I come to labour for my selfe, not for thee, as these thy
 maydens doe. Out of the which wee obserue these
 thinges,

things.

First a holy example of commendable thankfulness much accepted of God and men, as vnthankfulness is abhorred by heauen and earth: we haue examples herof in many wicked persons, as Laban his discourtesie to Gen. 21. 2, Jacob, Saule vnto Dauid, and the wicked Ammonites 1 Sam. 19- to his ambassadors: To speake nothing of Pharaohs butler vnto Ioseph, of Nabal vnto Dauid, and also the 2 Sam. 10. 1 inhabitants of Keilah, which being famous in y^e scrip- Gen. 40. 23. ture for the enemies of God, so are they branded with 1 Sam. 25. this note of vnthankfulness, as if it were an especial 10. fruit of vnrighteousnes. And truely this is most wor- 1 Sam. 33. thy to be vrged in our sinfull age for the children forget 12. their duties to their naturall parents, the people tread their preachers vnder their feet, for telling them the truth we alwayes remember what we haue giuen, but forget what we haue receyued: whereas it is a token of the best nature, to forget what we haue don to other but to remember what we haue receyued: Surely surely: vnthankfulness towards God, and towards men, neuer raigned or raged more. Towrd God, for the continuance of his Gospell, peace, plenty & welfare of our countrey: toward men, In gadging the benefites that are dayly bestowed, by casting in the teeth, as if they were deserued. The heauens abhorred this wickednesse, and the heauens will raigne downe destruction vpon these thankeles persons, as they did vpon Sodom and Gomorra for the like offence.

Luc. 17. 27
28.

Secondly by this we gather, that the prayers of the righteous, are more acceptable to the godly, the giuing or taking of almes. For when Boaz promised Ruth this kindnesse, she thanked him, and no more: but Verse. 10 now, when he praied for her to the Lord, she protested that he comforted her, and that hee had spoken those things which were to the heate of his handmaide, (that is) which pleased her exceedingly well. As if shee had said, I am bound vnto thee my Lord for thy kindnesse, but thou hast comforted mee more with thy prayer, then with that: So that here for herself & for all the godly, she protesteth, that of two benefits. she

Ioh. 4. 14.

Eccles. 11. 1

Jam. 2. 15.
16.

she was most of all comforted by his prayer: which tieth in her, a more hungering and thirsting after righteousness, then after all the maintenance of this present life: for whosoever drinketh of that water of worldly welfare, shall thirst againe: but whosoever drinketh of the water of faithful prayer shall neuer thirst any more. This one consideration made the blind men of Iericho cry so importunately after Christ, saying, Iesus thou son of Dauid haue mercy on vs. Some heavenly benefite they looked for, earthly he had none. And this teacheth vs, that when we giue, we should also pray for a blessing vpon our beneuolence: for Salomon compareth the giuing of almes to the casting of corne into a moist or fruitfull lande, so as the husbandman prayeth for a blessing vpon his seede, euen so he which giueth to the poore must pray for a benefite vpon his beneuolence. But if any gather by this my speech, that it is sufficient to pray, & not to giue to the poore, I answer, This scripture condemneth this folly, when it saith: If a brother or sister be naked and want meate, and thou say vnto him, go warme thy selfe, and feed thy self and yet giue them nothing: this is a dead and damnable not a liuing and a sauing faith: of these kind of people the world is full, which say, alas God help you, God provide for you, God giue you patience, but nothing cometh from them, saue onely faire wordes. To whome we may say as a begger once did to a popish Bishop, desiring a peece of money of him, were it neuer so little but the Bishop saide no, he would giue him a pardon: to whom the beggar replied, I perceiue, if your pardon were worth any thing I should not haue it: euen so if the prayers of these people were any thing worth, they would not giue them, because they giue nothing.

Lastly, by this verse, when Ruth excuseth her selfe that she should not be as one of his maidens, she setteth downe a true example of Christian simplicitie: for it may be she thought that Boaz was deceiued in her, that he might thinke she came to worke for him, and not for her selfe: therefore she telleth him plainly that she

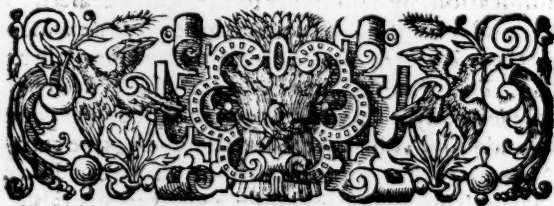
she should not be as one of his maidens, that is, as one of his hyred seruantes. So that these wordes of Ruth tend to her owne hinderaunce, if Boaz had bene deceyued in her, yet godlines wil not conceale that, which maketh against it selfe, if the question be made of profite. Whereby we note, that encroching for bargains, facing for promises, suing for counterfaite titles, & such like actions, cannot agree with the simplicitie of a godly minded Christian: whose conscience is his court, his religion his attorney, and the word of God his iudge, to pronounce definitiue sentence against his owne cause, if it tend to the perill and damage of his neighbour, or discredite of his profession. Oh that wee had more of this simplicitie; and lesse of this subtiltie, whereby wee deceiue our owne soules, betray the glorious gospel of Iesus Christ, confound the weake mindes of our waucering brethren, make shipwracke of pure consciences; & cast our selues headlong for the worlde into the fire of hell.

But Boaz, saide] This last verse sheweth vnto vs, that Boaz was not deceyued in Ruth, but shutteth vp the communication, by calling her to meat, and dealeth to her so abundantly, that she leaueth some. By the which wordes there is noted two degrees of the kindnesse of this man. First, that in his owne person he calleth her to meat: secondly, that with his owne handes hee gaue her abundantly. Where we see againe and againe commended vnto vs the humilitie & liberalitie of this Boaz he disdaineth not to call so simple a guest to his table, knowing her to be a faithfull sister, for whose sake, if need were, he was bound to lay downe his life. Whereby we are instructed to cast of the statelines of our stomackes, standing vpon our pantophles, scant vouchsafing to looke frendly on a poore man or woman, much lesse to speake kindly to eyther of both. Againe, his liberalitie by giuing so plentifully vnto her with his owne handes, it appeareth hee was none of these counterfayre giuers, which promise much and performe little, and for euery carnall companions talebearing, and

whispering, withdraw their promised and bounden liberalitie, from Church and poore, from minister and religion. Oh howe colde is this deuotion, which proceedeth from a sodaine humour, and soone endeth to God his dishonour: Better had it beene for those men not to shew any fauour at all, then after they haue rashly begunne, causelesse to withdraw their beneuolence from Christ. But I consider, there shall bee some that shall say at the latter ende, vnto our sauiour, we haue prophesied in thy name, we haue eaten in thy presence, and yet hee shall say vnto them, depart from mee yee workers of iniquitie, I know you not: then shall they bee blessed, which haue wasted their wealth for religion, consumed their liuing on the faithfull, and continued their liberality vnto the end.

Nowe let vs giue prayse
to God,

The end of the sixte
Lecture.



The seuenth Lecture.

Chap. 2. ver. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23.

15. *And when she arose to gleane, Bohaz commaunded his seruantes, saying: let her gather among the sheaues and do not rebuke her.*
- 16 *And let fall some of the sheaues for her, & let it lie that she may gather it & p. and rebuke her not.*
- 17 *And so she gleaned in the field till euening, & she thre-*
bed

seed that which she had gathered, & it was about an epha of barley.

18 And she tooke it vp, & went into the city; & her mother in law saw what she had gathered, & she tooke forth & gaue vnto her, of that which she had left, when she was sufficed.

19 Then her mother in law said vnto her, where hast thou gleaned to day? & where wroughtest thou? Blessed bee he that knew thee: & she shewed her mother in lawe with whom she had wrought, & saide the mans name with whom I wrought to day was Boaz.

20 And Naomi saide vnto her daughter in lawe: blessed be he of the Lord, for he ceaseth not to doe good, both to the liuing, & to the dead. Againe Naomi said vnto her the man is neere vnto vs, and of our affinitie.

21 And Ruth the Moabstesse saide, hee saide also certainly vnto me, that thou shalt be with my seruants vntill they haue ended all the harvest which is mine.

22 And Naomi answered vnto Ruth her daughter in law: it is best my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens: that they meet thee not in another field.

23 Then she kept her by the maidens of Boaz, vnto the end of barley harvest, & wheat harvest, & dwelt with her mother in law.



Here verses vnto the ende of this Chapter containe those things which Boaz and Ruth did, with Naomi also after that Ruth had dined. The wordes haue two parts. The first betweene Ruth and Boaz in the field. The seconde betweene Ruth and her mother in lawe at home.

The first part is in ver. 15. 16. 17. wherein is set down what Ruth did after dinner: that she arose to gather ears, which is declared by the time, verse 17: and the quantity in the same verse, an epha of barley. Secondly, Boaz reneweth his commandement to his seruantes for

Ruth, wherein he willeth them, first that they suffer her to gather where she please: verse 15. Secondly, that they willingly let fall vnto her out of the sheaues, and suffer her to take it vp.

The other part of Ruth and Naomi, is containd ver. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. & declareth what these twaine did after Ruth came from the field, and after her coming home, ver. 18, bringing both her gleaned corne, and reserued victuall. They twaine commune of those things which Boaz had done to Ruth. First, Naomi asketh Ruth where she had gleaned that day, ver. 19. To which Ruth answereth telling the name of the man in whose possession she had gathered to be Boaz, verse 19. Secondly, his curtesie towards her, not onely for that present, but also biddeth her to abide with his maides vnto the end of his haruest, after this, Naomi first praieth for the man. ver. 20. alleadging his kindnes, not onely to them that are liuing, but also to those that are dead, & telling Ruth that the man was her kinsman. Secondly, she counselleth Ruth, verse 22. that she take his proffer, and abide with his maydens, for feare shee be denyed in another field: which Ruth perfourmeth ver. 23. and keepeth with them to the ende of barley haruest, and wheat haruest, and afterward with her mother. Of these parts let vs briefly speake, as the spirit shal assist, and the time permit.

Then she arose] After dinner like one carefull of her busines, she repaireth to her former worke, & here by y way this question may be made, whether Ruth gaue any thanks to God for her meat, seeing it is not mentioned: for this doubt must not be omitted, nor passe vndissolued, lest our carnal companions in this age, which come & go to their meat like bruit bests, may seeme to haue the example of some godly persons, for the defence of their abominable vnthankfulness. To which I answer, first, if any godly person haue at any time, omitted his duetie, we must not by his example be drawne to do the like; for we must liue by y rule of the word of God, not by the examples of the faythfull: Secondly, wee must know that euery thing or circumstance is not needfull

In euery place of the scripture to be declared particularly, for in this place wee reade not that Ruth gaue any thanks to Bohaz for her meate: yet wee must not conclude that she gaue none at all, & if she thanked a man, much more the eternall God, which framed his minde to shew her that fauour. Thirdly, she being with Bohaz it was his duetie at his owne table to pray, and to giue thanks, which no doubt but hee did, and she did with him. Therefore to the wordes, where we first note the true vse of eating and drinking the benefites of God, which is, that by them wee may bee enabled to followe our vocations: For here wee see Ruth after meate, returneth to her worke againe, as if the holy Ghost had flatly set downe, that for this cause we must eate and drink that by them we might worke more freely, and labour more diligently. Therefore Salomon pronounceth a blessing vpon a whole countrey, whose princes and nobles eate for strength, and not for drunkennes: and these are accounted two sinnes of Sodome, idlenes & fulnes of breade, that is, eating and no working. This point can neuer be stood enough vpon, that the belly-gods and vnorderly persons of our age might bee perswaded therewith to leaue their drinking & drunkennesse their eating and gluttonie, and their plaies and pastimes: for the meat is no sooner out of their mouthes, but the renewing of their sport entreth into their hearts, how they may spend more time in idlenes and vanity. And aboue all, this is profitable for seruingmen to note, who wish nothing but libertie: & their owne consciences know, yf if they may choose, they will dwell with no maysters but where they may do little worke, therefore came the old prouerb, a yong seruingman an old beggar; because vnthriftines in youth is seldome worne out in age: This I speake not against y calling w no doubt but is good & lawfull, but onely to warne them & exhort them, to banish their vntimely eating & drinking, and to put away idlenes, w some lawfull & profitable busines. And let vs all be Ruthes in this point, as in other her conditions, that we may eate our bread in the sweat of our browes, & rise to labour not to pastime, that wee may

Eccle. 10. 1

Ezec. 16. 5

The Reward of Religion.

remember our olde curse which came by reason of sin, and ease the contagion of our diseased natures, with the dayly following our honest vocations.

Secondly, by this also may we vrge; although the holy Ghost in this place speaketh not of it) the worship and obseruation of the sabbaoth; for as men go from worke to meat, & after from meat to worke againe: euen so reason woulde, that as we sanctifie the Sabbaoth in the fore noone, by preaching and hearing, the afternoone should be hallowed with the same exercise. But of all works, this the greatest is in smallest reputation; for men go from hearing to their meat; but from their meat eyther to sleep, or to open prophaning the Lords day, with most execrable & accursed pleasure or negligence. They say once a day is enough, yea & too much also, except they did it better. Such clipping of God his seruice to satisfie our pleasures, will not stande with the least & the smallest point of christianitie. And this they may be assured of, that in the last day, their owne diligence & weekly labours, in worldly busines, shall stande vp in iudgement against them, to condemne their negligence in the trauaile of godlines: yea and till this slacknes be amended, the time lost and past repented, they shall neuer come to the knowledge of God or his truth, themselves or their owne saluation: for he that sanctifieth the Sabboath, hath all religion: but he that prophaneth the Sabboath, hath none at all.

And Bohaz. In these words Bohaz reneweth his commandement to his seruants concerning Ruth, which we shewed you was vttered in the ver. 9. and now hee willet them, that though shee gather among the sheaues, yet none should shame her: meaning, none shoulde reprehend her: for reprehension to a godly and modest woman, is a matter of blushing or shame: And this to bee noted, that his minde, is though shee deserved blame, yet none of them shoulde say, blacke bee her eye, (as the proverbe is) that is, once accuse her for any faulte. Where wee note the wonderfull care that Bohaz had of her, that the longer hee looked on her, the better he liked her: her solitarie behauiour:
her

her contented trauaile, her diligent order in going so orderly to her busines againe, were as orations or persuasions, to make him being godly, to approue and commend her aboue all the residue. Which teacheth vs, that wee shoulde bee haled on with the same cordes of honestie, diligence and religion, to extend our liberalitie in large gifts and curteous speches, to euerie poore person that wanteth our helpe: and that the rather considering pouertie is a curse of sinne, wherein we are all as guilty as they: therefore like feeling members of our brothers miseries: where wee see the foresaide graces appeare, there let our bounden beneuolence excell, that they may bee encouraged with our benefites, and wee may bee comforted with their prayers, and both conioyned in this life, and in the life to come.

Secondly, Ruth would not gather among the sheaues, because no doubt shee was studious to auoide offence, for if she had so done, she must needs incurre the suspicion, though not the reproofe of misbehauour, coueting more then was her due: for the eares, & not the sheaues were appointed for the poore. Whereby wee note that the poore must bee carefull aboue many thinges, they abuse not the libertie of the rich: although they may goe without correction, to the sheaues in the fieldes, or the heapes in the barn, yet they must not eate vp more then becometh them to aske. Now it were without conscience to aske so much as the owners cannot giue, without the shortening of their handes to other their poore brethren. And this condemneth the taking desire of them, which are neuer contented: and those vngodly robbers and theeuers, which aske and yet haue no need: both which kind of people will to the vttermost, craue and haue all a mans possessions, without any mercy, vnder pretence of pouertie, yea & will neuer accept the willing mind of them that are not able to giue, but like the sea, gape for the water out of the little land brookes. These are officers and bribers, extortioners and vsurers, rackers of farmes, rayfers of rents, takers of fines, & defrauders of simple

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simple persons in bargayning, who all are condemned in the last commaundement as the couetours of other mens goods: & therefore guiltie of eternall damnation.

And do you] These wordes are the second part of his comandement, wherby the former point is confirmed, that Bohaz knew Ruth would not picke the sheaves, & therefore willetch to let fall on the ground plentifully, for her to auoide her farther and more vnprofitable labour, which he therefore doth, that he might testifie his goodes to bee not onely his, but all theirs that feare the Lord: for no doubt but there were many that did gleane in the fiede beside Ruth, with whom Bohaz did not thus deal: shewing vnto vs that there may be a difference in giuing, and that we are not bounde to giue equally to all, but as the personnes are. so must be the gift: the poorest must not haue the greatest share, but the godliest, for pouertie without godlinesse is like the apple of Sodome, which is as faire to looke on, as any other, but being taken in the hand, resoluethe to smoke, and powder. so if vngodly poore folks be a little examined, they shalbe found as y^e apple not worth the eating, so the other not worthy to be giuen to; although they crie like the horseleaches daughters, giue, giue, yet wee must answere the wth spare, spare. But Bohaz doth in this place as Ioseph did to his brethren, he feasted all of the, but Beniamins part was fivetimes so big as the residue: afterwarde he gaue to euery one chaunge of garmente, but vnto Benjamin he gaue three hundred shikles, and fiv change of garments, the reason of all this was, because he was Rachell his owne mothers sonne, but all the other were his fathers children onely: euen so must wee doe good to all that are our fathers children by creation; but to our mothers children, which is, the Church of Christ, the household of faith, wherof Rachell was a tipe, wee must with speciall portions for feeding their hunger & clothing of their nakednesse, compassie their wantes, with the supply of our beneuolence, for which cause Saint Paule in his preaching was willed by the other Apostles, to haue speciall and heedfull care ouer the poore bretheren: which if it were

put

Gen. 43. 34.

Cap 45. 22

Gal. 2. 10.

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put in practise, we should be more able to do good vnto the godly: and to deny the contrary minded. This one thing is aboue all other to be required, y^e euery one giue where God may most of all bee glorified, but the vngodly sort take their reliefe as the hungry houndes their feeding, if they bee hindered they will fly vppon their owne maysters, in like sort the wicked will blaspheme God liberally, and not humbly thanke or praise him, for any thing they receyue. What if they murmur against thee and say, my part is not so good as thine, you giue him more then to mee, and you care for none but for these precise fellows: Tell them againe, it is lawfull for thee to dooe with thy owne as thou wilt: neyther ought thy eye to bee euill, because my hande is good: the vnworthiest in the worlde shall haue the worst biest portion: they which with them are last with thee let bee first, & the first with them, be last with thee: for spirituall men must looke for spirituall hearts, to cast the seede of their almes into good ground, where the fruit may be increased, the want of the faithfull may be relieved, the glory of Christ may bee magnified, thy owne duction may bee discharged; a good conscience satisfied, and thy soule for euer comforted. Secondly, by this wee obserue, that Boaz might haue admitted many hinderances, whereby hee might haue bene better aduised before he gaue such large liberty, eyther to Ruth or to his seruantes for her, as to gather among the sheaues, or to let fall handfulls vnto her. Hee might haue thought thus with himselfe, it was lately a deth for a long time together, it may bee shortly the Lord wil send such another; & the all that I haue will be too little for my selfe and my family, and therefore I must be wise, and giue not so much till I knowe what I shall lacke? but all this coulde not turne away the heart of Boaz from doing good vnto Ruth, for hee esteemed more of one godly Ruth, then of all the possessions hee had: neyther ought any of the godly once to admit any such doubt in their minde, as to be vexed in distrust of the mercy of God to come. They must pray with Dauid, O Lord incline my heart to thy testimonies

Psal: 119.36

monies, & not to couetousnes. The widdow of Zareph-
 1. King. 17. tha might haue so aunswered Eliah, that she had but
 so little lefte as would onely suffice for one meale, &
 giue him nothing, yet she was obedient and beleueed
 the worde of the prophet, and her store increased, that
 she wanted no more.

The Church of the Macedonians might haue saide,
 2. Cor. 8. 2 that they were poore Saints as well as the residue, there.
 3. 4 fore as they asked nothing but were content with their
 pouertie, so none shoulde charge them in giuing too-
 ther, but yet the Apostle Paule said, they supplied the
 want of the Coriathians, and gaue them more then
 they were able. And euerlasting is the commendation
 7 Tim. 1. 16 which hee giueth of Onesiphorus, how often hee refre-
 17. 18. shed him and was not ashamed of his chains, but came
 to Ephesus and visited him there, and followed him
 to Rome many hundred miles, that there also he might
 succour him with his charitie: Which teacheth vs, when
 we haue to deale with the godly, as all these personaes
 had, no cost must be spared, couetousnes not admitted,
 no feare of want suspected, for he which is Lorde ouer
 all, is also rich vnto all.

Obadiah in a famine sedde an hundred pro-
 phets, yea and hidde them in caues, from the wrath
 of Iezabell. What want did he sustaine thereby? sure-
 ly none. for distrust causeth want, and not liberali-
 1. King. 18. tic, for hee which maketh thee to feede his Saintes
 13. nowe, will also provide another to feede thee when
 thy store is wasted. Oh hearken to this you possessors
 of the earth, vppon whome in this time of dearth
 the eyes of the poore dooe looke vp, as on the hands
 of the Lorde, whereby hee filleth euerie liuing thing
 with his plenteous goodnesse. Open your gates wi-
 der, that more poore may come into your houses,
 to bee refreshed with breade: open your purses far-
 ther, that more beneuolence may come out, to
 bee caste into the fruitfull lande of the famished
 poore, for after many dayes you shall finde it a-
 gayne: put on the bowelles of compassion, and let not
 your

your owne bretheren want, seeing you haue inough. Hee that willett you to dooe this for his sake, will commaunde heauen and earth, to restore his owne debte, which you haue lent him: feare not that you shall want, for the Lorde is the owner of the earth, & this is sent vppon vs, to trie your charitie and compassion towards the poore for his sake: if you now be liberall. Paule hath prayed for you that you may finde mercie in the day of the dissolution of all thinges, and the Lorde hath promised to the mercifull mercy, at that day when hee lyeth sicke vppon his death bed. Make you treasures therefore of this worldly wealth, and sende them by the handes of the poore into God his kingdome before you: spare not the sheaues in the barne, the eares in the fielde, nor the heapes in your garners, for hee that spendeth for the members of Christ, shall receyue the greater advantage. Remember you are the partakers of the same faith which they had that sold their possessions to giue to the Saintes and to gaue heauen: but you neede not to sell any landes, onely deliuer your corne plentifully to the poore: which if you doo not, they shall rise in iudgemente against you at the latter day, because they spared neyther landes nor liues, and you will not giue a little corne for the name of Christ.

And [so shee gathered] This is the last parte of that which Ruth did in the fielde, shewing her diligence shee vsed in her labours, by working out the whole day vntill the euening, and gathering an epha of barley: for by this appeareth, that shee laboured as faithfully for her selfe and her mother, as if shee had beene an hired seruant; or her mother looking vppon her. By the which is noted vnto vs the diligence of children and seruantes, in the labours and businesse of their maisters and parentes, for they must not seeke or couet to please them with eye seruice, but their duties are required, as well in the time of their absence as in their presence.

Bee

Be Ruthes, my beloued, in this point, whosoever are bond or free, for they *W* are faithfull in a little shall be made great rulers, and they which haue not beene faithfull in the earthly treasures, shall neuer be trusted with the heauenly. By this also they may learne, which think they may lawfully take their ease in their owne busines; but we see by this example of Ruth, that religion bindeth vs to be as diligent in our owne, as in another mans trauaile, committed vnto vs vpon trust, for as to him we are faithfull, because wee receiue wages, so in our owne we must be painful, least the Lord arise against vs for the mispending of our time: we owe more dutie to our heauenly father, then to all the earthly maisters of the world.

Againe, the quantity of her gathering is here described, to be an epha of barley: for the vnderstanding whereof we must note that there were three kindes of measures among the Hebrewes, which are mentioned in the scripture: the first was an homer, which was the measure of Manna that the Lord allowed to euery household when they were wandering in the wilderness, and contayned of our English measure, sixe pintes and somewhat more; the second measure was a hin, which after our measure contained ten pintes and somewhat more, the third was an epha, which is this that measured the barley of Ruth, and it contained ten homers, which commeth to sixtie pintes, which being deuided by eyght, amounteth to the quantity of seuen gallons and one pottell, which is a bushell lacking one pottell, after our English measure. By the which wee may obserue, how largely the Lord prouided for Ruth by the liberality of Boaz, for shee gathered more in one day then otherwise she could in two or three: where the Lorde himselfe sheweth vs howe she tooke the curtisie of Boaz, and the seruantes scattred for her according to their maisters comādemēt, that her hand might be quickly filled, her trauaile the more eased, her labour better rewarded, & finally mother & daughter be both more comfortably refreshed *W* their kinsemens kindness. *And when shee tooke &c.* The day being ended and

Ruth

Leui. 19. 36

& 27. 16

Exo. 16. 36.

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Ruth wearied with her vnwonted and yet diligent tra-
uaile, vp she taketh her bundell of corne, and the scraps
of meate she had referued, & trudgeth to her mother,
that she might vnderstand of her good hap, and they
both together reioyce for the corne Ruth had gather-
ed, and the good will which Boaz had offered. Out of
the which wee may first of all obserue a heauenly and
godly example of obedience and loue toward her mo-
ther in law, for we see in this place, that she doeth not
onely labour for her liuing, but refresheth her with
that which was giuen her to satisfie her owne hunger;
while she was in the fiede in her diligent labour. Was
it not sufficient for Ruth, that shee left her people and
countrey to come with her mother in lawe, but shee
must also go for her, she sitting at home, in a poore
and contemptible manner to gleane in the fiede: or if
she did that willingly, yet must she saue the meat from
her owne mouth and put it into Naomies? Here we see
she failed in nothing that might eyther commend her
loue, declare her obedience, & signifie her care toward
poore and olde Naomi her deare and godly mother,
And this teacheth vs, that we must be Ruthes to our a-
ged parents, we must labor abroad, & they must tary at
home, we must set our nimble bones to the heauy bu-
sines, and their wearied bodies must rest in the houses:
It is vngodlinesse to say, that the olde man or woman,
shall labour and care for our wretched riot, and care-
les expenses, but rather let the young gallant take his
owne parentes vpon his backe, carry them from their
house of trouble to the harbour of peace. Let Esau and
Iacob hunt vennison for Isaack, for he is old and must
tary at home. Let Iacob and little Ioseph tarry in their
Tentes and the lusty youthes his sonnes and brethren
lie in the fieldes and keepe their fathers sheepe, and ra-
ther then olde Iacob should go, let yong Ioseph trudge
to his bretheren though he bee sold for his labour. Let
Ruth go gleane for Naomi, and not Naomi for Ruth,
for this is the first commaundement with promise.
But oh the gracelesse generations of our vngodly age,
where men are become so tender ouer their disobedi-

Gen. 27. 33

Gen 37. 14.

ent

ent broode, that in their labours they will spare their wanton children, and weare their crazed carcases, they had rather put both feet into the graue by their ouerlabours, then bring their vntamed steeres, and vnruely heyfers, their sonnes and daughters to the yoke of diligent trauaile. And these gracelesse impes, will looke and laugh vpon their parentes, and say, it doeth their olde bodies good: And doth it so? why, is it better for a tyred horse to runne a race, then for a restie palfrey? You are ready inough to catch that which is good from your parentes, why take ye not their labours, if they bee so good for them? No no, you are the heauinesse of your parentes: you shoulde be o-lives to make them looke cheerefully, but you are on-i-ons that make them weepe bitterly. But yet let not Ruth and the godly exhorte vs in vaine, for if wee dooe the labour, wee shall haue their hyre, if we honour our parents, with our actions and deedes, as wee doe with our wordes, then shall our dayes bee multiplied in the lande, or els our liues shall bee shortened with vntimely death, and our posterity rooted out by the iust iudgement of God.

Secondly, by this example of Ruth, that shee brought her mother of that which shee had left: wee learne this doctrine, if our friendes giue vs liberally, and wee haue plenty, let vs not consume all vpon our selues, but let vs reserue some for other. When our sauiour had twice feasted many thousandes, still there was some thing left which hee commanded to bee taken vp, shewing vs thereby, if God liberally poure out his benefites vpon vs, it is not that wee shoulde the more riotously lauish them out vpon meate or pleasure: for it is a common answer in these dayes, if wee reprove gamesters for their play, drunkardes for their costes, and proud personnes for indecent apparell, wherein euery one spendeth more then woulde suffice two or three poore persons, they will tell vs they spende nothing but their owne, and what haue wee to dooe with it? But we reply, that they spend more then is their owne, for the earth

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earth is the Lordes and all that therein is. They are but stewardest of their goods, and not Lordes and mai-
sters, and therefore they shall giue account for euery penny mispent, when it shall not profite them to say, we wasted our wealth at dicing and gaming, we consumed our landes by eating and drinking, and spent thus much money in gaye apparell, and other bra-
uerie.

Secondly God gaue them those benefites, not so much for themselues as for others: for as the Sunne shineth not for it selfe, but for vs, the earth bringeth forth fruite, not for it selfe but for vs: so wealthie men, are not wealthy for themselues onely, but for all the poore members of Christ, that they might liberally bestowe vpon others. The heathen king Assuerus, making a feast to all his Empire, yet he gaue this lawe, that none Esh. 1.8.
shoulde bee compelled to drinke or to eate more then they needed or pleased: so abhominable is gluttony, e-
uen in nature, that it hurteth man, spoyleth beastes, and killeth the fruites of the earth: for the rankest corne is none of the best. Then heere is temperance by this example commaunded: For the Phisitians say, that it is most wholesome to come and rise from meate with a hungrie stomacke, and the worde of God saith, that wee must eate for strength and nature, not for appetite and drunkennesse. But oh that our fatte Ba-
sanites woulde admit this as a wholesome and a godly doctrine, then would not their bellies and paunches growe so great as they are; nor their heartes so hard-
ned against the poore: for their dogges shoulde goe empty, there abundance woulde be diminished, their gluttonies and drunkennesse banished, their pleasures and delights expelled, and their pride and apparell bee humbled, and their godly and needy bretheren succoured.

Thirdely, by this wee note, that the poorest must strue to bestowe somewhat vnto their bre-
thren that want: yea, though they spare it from their owne necessities: but especially children to their parentes, and one kinsman to another: for
thus

Luc. 21. 2

thus wee see Ruth doeth, she spared when she had inough, and that shee gaue to her mother that wanted. Which godly kindnesse putteth vs in mind of the poore widdowe in the Gospell, that came and gaue two mites into the Lordes treasury, and the Lorde doth greatly commend her for it, about the rich offrings of the wealthy: as if a little thing that a poore man doth, were more accepted then the multitudes of rich men, Indeepe to the worlde the largest gift maketh the greatest shewe, but to the Lord the little portions of a willing minde, if it be but a cup of cold water, is greater then the flesh pots of Egypt, and all the daintie fare of the king of Babilons court. For our sauour encourageth vs by this meanes that they which haue little to giue shoulde not abstaine, but certainly know that the Lorde looketh on the hearte not on the hande, on the minde not on the gift, for that which in the presence of the worlde is despised, in the sight of God is best accepted. Therefore euery one must looke to deale some good by their liuing, be it neuer so small, for as there is no hearbe, but it yeeldeth some fruite, so there must be no man but he must giue somewhat, that so hee might fulfill the glorie of the Gospell.

Bur her mother in law] Here in this verse Naomi seeing the plentie of the gleaned corne, and reserued victuail, like a godly woman falleth to prayer for a blessing vppon him that had giuen so liberally vnto Ruth: W^h is as a thanks-giving for the benefite receyued: and afterwarde she questioneth with Ruth, where she had gleaned that day, Ruth telleth her, in the possession of Boaz.

Where wee first of all note the duety of parentes to their children, and maisters to their seruantes, which is, to call them to a reckoning where and how they bestowe their time, therefore saith Naomi, where haste thou gathered to day, and where hast thou wrought: Condemning this softnes & suffering in such kinde of parentes, as are afraid to speake to their children & seruants, not for their worke, but for their mispending the Sabbath, the idle iourneyes they make to tauernes and playes,

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playes, to feasting and dauncing, should be examined by their gouernours, as Naomi doeth Ruth, where hast thou wrought to day? Whose busines wast thou imployed in? what place did call thee from the seruice of God? and what motion did cause thee to dishonour the sabboth? No, no they can suffer them to violate the Lords day in pleasure, that they might drudge all the weeke after in their worldly trauailes. Why doeth not some man giue recreation to his seruants of his owne six? but they must rob the Lord of the seauenth also: How vnequall is this, to put him out that hath but one part, and to score him vp that hath so many. I am perswaded that of all other tokens, of irreligion among vs there is none greater then this, to suffer our children and seruants to violate the Lords owne day that they might the more willingly labour and trauaile for them on the weeke dayes: But yet let the authoritie of parents remaine, that God hath giue this power vnto them, and let the duty of children and seruants appeare, that as Ruth giueth answere to Naomi from point to point, how & where she applied her time, euen so they are bound vpon paine of God his eternall curse, to giue willing and gentle accounts to them when they are demanded in such like matters.

Secondly by this prayer of Naomi, *Blessed bee he of the Lord, that knew thee*, that is, which approued thee and shewed thee fauour, we note this to be our duty, to pray for our benefactors, seeing we cannot reward them, so doeth Naomi in this place, & so doeth Paul ^{2 Tim. 1. 16} for Onesiphorus. that the Lord would shew mercy vnto him in the day of his appearing: teaching vs y^e our spiritual praiers are more necessary for them then their temporall benefits are for vs: & therefore let vs learn to pray a right, seing it is our duty to pray for our frends. These painted prayers of many which come from the lips or frō wicked harts are such as the prayers of roaguing beggers at euery doore for base reliefe, and also the commonest that are among many poore people in these dayes, are abomination in the eyes of the Lord, *no benefit to them for whome they are vttered, and* *prayers*
L
the

the poison of those that thus do vse them. Therefore beloued learne, to account of them as they are, clouds carried about with euery winde, welles and no water, great words, but no grace in them. stoppe your eares at these bread prayers, and withdraw your hands from giuing any reliefe to them that abuse this heauēly Blessing.

Then said Naomi. In this verse Naomi repeateth her praier, and addeth a reason of the same, because hee hath not ceased to do good towards the liuing, and toward the dead, that is, hee did good to my hulband and children when they were aliue, and now to vs their posteritye, they being dead, for doing good to vs for their sakes, they doe it to them: for cyther interpretation will stand. For wee must not imagine, that this liberality doeth any good to them that are deade. because they were in Moab, these in Iuda, they were consumed in their graues, and vnfit for any beneuolence, as for their soules they needed no earthlie beneficence: for that remaineth true for ever which Salomon saith, the liuing know that they shall dy, but

Ecc. 9. 5. 6. the dead know nothing, neit er haue they any more part, seeing their remembrance is forgotten, the thing which they loued & the thing which they hated and the thing they desired is now perished, with thē, neither haue they any more part of al the thinges y are done vnder the sunne. By the which we may see the delusion of them which teach vs to buy prayers and pardons for our frēds that are deade, that their paines may bee eased which now they endure, for if nothing can profit them that is done vnder the sunne, then neither our prayers nor purses cā giue thē any reliefe, but by these words we learne, that if we do good to y childre and widdowes of our deceased friends, it is all one, as if we did good to their own persons. Thus said Naomi

2-Sam. 9: in this place, & thus Dauid did good to his friend Ionathan being dead, when he did kindly intreat Mephibosheth his son being aliue. The Lord himselfe protesteth in the scripture, that he did good to the Israelites

Mat. 23. 40 and Iewes, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacobs sakes and

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and our sauiour in the Gospel declareth, that the good wee doe to the least of his brethren being on earth, wee doe it to him which raigneth in heauen; for this is the duty of true frendshippe, to make much of our frendes when they are departed, to be a friend to their friends, and to bee an enemy to their enemies, as the Lord promised Abraham. Therefore let vs cast away this counterfaite kindnes, and performe this godlye loue, wherein others before vs haue walked, and as wee were wont louinglye to receyue the parentes being aliue, so let vs ioyfullye entertayne the children nowe they are deade, for true frendshippe loueth at all tymes, and godly kindnesse must neuer be remooued. As wee wishe that others shoulde vse vs when we are gone, so let vs vse others now they are absent.

Gen. 12. 23

Pro. 17. 17.

Moreouer Naomi sayd. In these wordes shee giueth comfort vnto Ruth, shewing her, that his beneuolence was not causelesse, seeing he was neere vnto them and of their affirmitye, beeing and appointed person to redeeme their inheritaunce. For in the law of the Lorde, he hath decreede for the poore of the Iewes, that if any person had solde his inheritance, the nexte of his kindred myght redeeme it, and restore it to the family againe, which comming into the minde of Naomi, shee hopeth that by this meanes they should come to their inheritaunce againe, seeing Bohaz, who was one of the nexte of her kindred, had so curteouslye intreated the widdow and heyre.

leuit. 25. 25

Deu 25. 5. 6

Whereby we note the great care that the Lord hath ouer the poore, which by a lawe decreed, that they shoulde not for euer be deprived of theyr inheritance, for at the farthest they shoulde come to it againe at the yeere of Iubile. And truly this lawe beeing ceased, because the Iewes common wealth is ouerthrowen, yet the Lorde executeth the same in some measure amongst the gentiles daylye. For now wee maye see and heare, how he exalteth many from the duste, to walke and sitte with princes; howe hee

giueth greate possessions vnto them whose fathers had not one foote of land, and casteth many from their vnlawfull titles. And euery day wee heare of some caste down and humbled, and other list vp & exalted. Who

Hest. 7. 10. doth this? but the hande of the almighty that putteth & **8. 1.** downe Haman and raiseth vp Mordechai: refuseth

1. Sa. 16. 14 Saul and chooseth Dauid: remooueth Abiathar, and e-
Esa. 2. 2. 20. stablisheth Sadoch: banisheth Shebna, & aduanceth

Eliakim: and finally, that in fewe ages changeth all things. Therefore promotion commeth neyther from the east, not from the west, nor from the wildernesse, but from the throne of the Lorde of hosts, which openeth, and no man shutteth, humbleth and no man setteth vp, exalteth and no man casteth downe, and ruleth the course of all mankind by his vchangeable decree. Let not then the mightiest bee proude for their honour and dignitie, for the Lord destroyed the Anakims great princes & giants before the family of Caleb: much more will he doe those that are lysted vp by their wealth that should rather cast them down: & let vs doe good to those poore brethren among vs, for they shalbe lysted vp vnto riches, when the greatest and wealthiest among vs shall be cast downe into pouerty. But of this matter wee shall haue more occasion to speake in the fourth Chapter.

But Ruth saide, In this verse Ruth maketh relation of those things which Boaz saide vnto her, and praying for a blessing vpon him, because hee vouchsafed to take her into the company of his maydens, & gaue her leaue to gather to the end of haruest. Se that in this place, by these wordes of Ruth, wee haue an example of perfecte thankfulnessse, omitting nothing that might serue to commend the kindnesse of Boaz: and also of womanlike and godly modestye, that concealeth the cause of all this curtesie, which was her owne commendation, as alreadye wee haue shewed you. So that it is no parte or pointe of godlynes, to doe as our euill conditioned and ingratefull persons doo, which omitte that which serueth most for to commend their benefactors, and to lay

& **Yer. 11. 12**

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lay all the praise vppon their owne desertes . But Salomon willed that another mans, and not our owne mouth shoulde prayse vs : and moste vngodlye it is, when men will not in so ample manner confesse the benefites they haue receiued of other , but by all meanes extenuate them , which maketh men unwilling to doo any good , because they can haue no thanks for their labour . And this it is that caused coueteousnesse and bribery, extortion and vsury, to enter vppon their bodies and wealth , that would not gratifye with kinde and deserued reportes . So that now men will please themselues with money and rewards, that would haue beene satisfied with thankful wordes: which is a iust iudgment vpon the world, that would not bee contented to recompence kindness for kindness, and are now plagued with coueteousnes for kindness.

Wherefore Naomi. This is the last parte of this conference or dialogue, wherein Naomi counselleth Ruth to follow and take the proffer of Boaz, and abide with his maydens , to auoide all dangers, if the reapers denie her in another felde . Where wee firste of all note, that if wee acquaint our parents and friends, with our actions and enterprises , it myght goe farre better wyth vs in the thinges of this life; for their aged counsell which they haue bought with much experience may stay our vnsteddye mindes with their approoued aduise : Ruth in this place , declaring the curtesie of Boaz , hath it confirmed with the counsell of Naomi , and grounded vppon a reason which she knew not , nor feared not . For she thought , that in euerye place shee shoulde haue founde the lyke entertaynemente , and the reapers that then were, would so continue to the ende of haruest , but Naomi knewe they were often changed , and so in the ende it might fall out otherwise , then Boaz appointed, or Ruth expected. And this (me thinketh) doth shewe vnto vs what manner persons parentes ought to bee: for if children want counsell they shoulde bee

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Eph. 6. 2.

aduised by their parents: if comfort, it should be ministered by parents, if necessities, they should be provided by parents: if instruction, they should be guided by parents: & finally, if correction, they should be ordered by parents: which is not onely to be wished, but is required of the Lord that they bring them vpp in the feare and nurture of the Lord. And if this were duely weighed, and reuerently considered, as Eliaha cloake parted the waters of Iordan, so this woulde parte a sunder, and breake of many thousand mariages in our daies, where parents are not able to counsell nor willing to be counselled, which if they woulde they had not beene married. This I speake, not to the discredit of Marriage, but onely I exhorte, as from the Lord, that those which eyther are, or intend to be married, would looke and trauaile first for wisdom, and then for wiues, first for vertue, and then for husbands, wherein, if they followe my aduise, I assure them their mariages will be much merrier, and their posterity much happier.

Gen. 34. 1.

Secondly, by this wee gather, that it is a dangerous or indecent thing, for women to trauaile or worke alone without any companie, for the weakest are soonest oppressed, and women are quickly conquered. We knowe Dinah trauailing alone was taken & rauished by Sichem: and Abigail when she went to pacifie the wrath of Dauid, tooke seruants with her, as in this place Naomi counselleth Ruth, to abyde in the companie of the seruantes of Boaz, accountyng it an indecent and vnseemely thinge for women and maydens, to be seene alone. And truely if seruantes in our dayes had manye time more companie, there woulde be lesse dishonestie among them; for we knowe and see to our grieve, that the daylye and vsuall familiaritie of a fewe, hath bredde some disease in our Church, and distemper in our common wealth. This I speake, that euen in these dayes of peace, men woulde be more carefull ouer daughters and seruantes, and not to imploye them so

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commonly as they doe, in journeyes and trauaile and solitary busines, but for more assurance keepe them with company, which may be their defence against all dangers if any happen, and the auoyding of dishonestie if any be so lightly disposed.

Thirdlie, by this we note what company were best for both kinde of youthes, either young men or maidens. when Naomi saith it is good for thee to go forth with his maidens: that is, thou art a woman, and abide among his women and maidens, for all companions are neither fit nor lawfull, maidens among men, and men among maidens is for manie causes disallowed. First because there is no such equality in the sexe, that they might keepe together: for if they labour, it is not alike, and if they sport, their pleasures are contrarie, and if they dally it is flat iniquitie. In consideration whereof in olde time the wiues had one tent to dwell in, and the husbandes another: As we may see in Abraham, in Sara, in Iacob and his wiues, and like this it is that Miriam & the women of Israel prayed God by themselves after their deliuerance out of Egypt, and Moses and Aaron her brethren, with all the men of Israel by themselves. And also we know how the virgins of Israel went vp euery yeere into the wilderness to lament and talke with the daughter of Iephehath. Whereby we are taught, that not onely for feare of danger, but also for modesty & conscience sake, we must auoyd this mingled companies of men & women, except in necessarie occasions, as prayer priuately and publicquely, communication of godly pretended marriages and such like busines. Whereby also wee see at once condemned the feasting, dancing, meeting, playing and running of men and maidens together, without all respect of honesty and modesty. And that which is worst parents and maisters will behold their pastime, and delight in the vanity of their wanton children, trayning them vp in a dissolute life, and commending

Gen. 18. 30

Gen. 31. 32,

Exod 15. 20

IuP. 11. 37

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their indecent and vnseemly behauiour. Amend this negligence in the shell of infancy, and your children will grow vp to your greater comfort, and prosper to their more happy welfare, and the occasion of many sinnes will be cut of, if we follow the counsell of the spirite of God.

And so shee abode, This is the conclusion of this chapter & second part of this history, shewing vnto vs that Ruth followed the counsell of her mother, abiding wth the maidens of Boaz to the end of barley & wheat harvest & afterwards dwelleth wth her mother againe where wee obserue another example of obedyence in Ruth, that hearkened to the voyce of her mother, and went forth with the maidens of Boaz. And surely it is commonly seene, that such as the mother is, such is the daughter: for more Naomies would make more Ruths and mo good mothers would make mo good daughters: And in these dayes all the faultes of children may iustly be imputed to the folly of parents, as the olde crab goeth, so goeth the young, and as the old cocke croweth, so croweth the young: a serpent hatcheth a serpent not an eele, so euell parents bring forth euill and vngodly children, but good fathers by diligent instruction and tender admonition, by praying with and for their children, as Iob did, shall liue to see their generations as blessed as his was.

Secondly by this we learne an excellent example of godly liberality, in that Boaz suffered Ruth to gather wheat as well as barley, the best as well as the meaner. In like manner must we as willingly depart with, for Christes sake our wine as our water, our drinke as our drasse, and as wee commonly speeke, our white as our browne: and truely in this many good men offend, not because they giue it not, but because they thinke it to much to giue as if our best giftes were not best accepted in the presence of God. He which fed the Israelites with Angels food, would also that we should feede him in the godly poore with our worshipfull and daintiest fare.

This

Iob, 1. 5.
& 42. 12.

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This I speake not, that those which aske, should bee discontented with the meanest and fittest for them, for the prouerbe is, beggars must not bee choosers, as it is couetousnes not to vouchsafe the best wee haue (if need require) to the poore, so it is scornfulnes for the poore, like the Israelites, which loathed Manna and desired flesh to be discontented with their necessarie and present foode, and to lust for that which is aboue their vocation. But the vse of this point is, to perswade to be like minded vnto Boaz in this, to the godly poore, that we euery one without partiallitie or grudging, when necessitie requireth, giue our gold as well as our siluer, and distribute our dearest almes to our poorest brethren.

Thirdly haruest being done, Ruth abideth with her mother in law, for none of the godly will make a dayly and continuall trade of asking almes, or forsake their owne parents or poore habitations, for worldly respects, as appeareth by this example of Ruth. For it is no doubt, she fared well euery day with the seruants of Boaz, and much better then her poore mother could prouide for her at home, but she is not drawne away therewith, but is as contented to eat the hungry morsels with her mother at home, as the plentiful abroad. And it is great pittie any shoulde bee succored, which are not contented to liue hardly at home, and then to aske, when there is no other honest meanes left to liue. And this condemneth the common walking mates, which haue neither houses nor honestie, and it is greatest pittie y they shoulde be either succoured or suffered so to doe, for they are drones, which neuer come in hiues but to the hurt of other they waste all, but get nothing; neither haue they any other care, but to charg the godly and charitable people. Vnto such giue not, as we haue often said, for they which wil not liue of the sweat of their browes, let them not eate of the bread of our laboures. Now let vs giue prayse to God,

The end of the seuenth
Lecture.

The

The eight Lecture,

Chap. 3. ver 12 3. 4. 5. 6.

1 Afterward, Naomi her mother in law said vnto her, shall I not seeke rest for thee my daughter, that thou mayest prosper.

2 And now, is not Boaz, our kinsman, with whose maid thou was, behold he winnoweth barley in the floore this night.

Wash thee therefore and annoint thee, and put on thy clothes, and goe downe into the floore, and let not the man know thee, vntill he haue made an end to eat and drinke.

4 But when hee lieth downe, marke the place where he lyeth: then come thou, and encouer the place of his feete, and lie downe, and he shall tell thee what thou shalt do.

5 And shee said vnto her, whatsoever thou hast commanded me, that will I doe.

6 And so shee went downe into the floore, and did altogether her, as her mother in law had commanded her.



His third Chapter is the second occasion of this marriage, wherein Naomi especially dealeth with Ruth, how shee shoulde make knowne her sute to Boaz. The whole Chapter hath these two partes- first the counsell of Naomi to Ruth, secondly the effect of that counsell. The counsell is contained in these sixe verses now read, consisting also of two partes: first, her care for Ruth, verse 1. that her desire is to procure her prosperity: secondly, it meanes whereby Ruth might performe that which she aduised: first because Boaz was then alone in the floore winowing of barley: secondly, she must prepare her selfe to go to him: first, in her body by washing and anointing it: secondly, in her ornament, that she put on her best clothes, and so goe downe to

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the floore: after shee was come thether, she instructeth her, howe to behaue her selfe: first by keeping out of his sight and knowledge, till he had supped: secondly, by marking the place of his bed, and lying down at his feete, and declaring her sute vnto him: and he would tell her what she shoulde doe. After all this Ruth promisseth obedience, verse, 5. 6. and accomplisheth her mothers desire. Of these partes let vs briefly speake, as the spirit of God shall assist vs, and the tyme permit.

Afterwarde Naomi. In these wordes is declared vnto vs the great care that Naomi had of her daughter in law Ruth, for they are thus much in effect. Nowe both of vs are in quiet, and peaceable rest at home, yet I see that our welfare cannot alway endure, for I am olde, and the graue gapeth after mee, thou art young and a good marriage tarrieth for thee: it is my duety to looke for thy welfare, & to prouide for thy continual rest, if I be taken away: and being carefull of it, I haue now inuented the meanes, &c. Out of the which we note these two profitable doctrines.

First, that it is the duety of parentes to prouide for their children, when themselues shall bee taken awaie, yea though they haue no certaine assurance, whether they shall neede it or not. This wee may see here practised by Naomi: for she was neuer in better case since her arriual at Bethlehem, then she was at this present: Haruest was ended, prouision obtained, household furnished, & these two poor widows liued louingly together, yet then we see in her best estate, she is most careful for the mariage of Ruth. And truely this is required of all them that haue any children, to prouide for them that they should not care onely for their present maintenance, but also for their future commoditie. And this maketh many godly persons to maruaile, why men doe trouble theyr houses with theyr children, when they are able honestly to prouide for them abroad. Why then doe many permitte and suffer theyr sonnes and daughters, to spend the best of their youth in single estate, when it is rather required that

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that while they are young, they shoulde bee bestowed, Truly this maketh so many mariages against ſy parents mindes, when they are negligent to looke to their children, & then the children prouide for themſelues. Men looke for offers, as the mariner looketh for winde, and when the wind ſerueth, the tide falleth, ſo many would prouide for their children when it is too late. This injury is all heaped on the children, they match without wealth or bleſſing, they are detained in the beſt time of their daies; and finally, are diſcredited by their owne parentes. Would God, you that are naturall parentes would learne of Naomi, which was but a ſtepmother. She diſferred not the time, ſhe knewe it a ſinne againſt nature, that youth ſhould bee waſted, and not in marriage. ſhee had a conſcience of her duety, and a care to her daughter in lawe, that her welfare might encrease, her ſolitarie life be comforted, her name aduanced, & her religion rewarded, with a temporall bleſſing of a godly husband, and eternall ſaluation in the kingdom of heauen.

Secondly, by this wee gather that for manye cauſes marriage is better then the vnmarried eſtate, if with the feare of God it be vndertaken. For in this place Naomi calleth it reſt, as ſhe did in the firſt Chapter: and therefore by relation the vnmarried life is diſquietnes, and as reſt is better then trouble, ſo the married life is better then the other. And truely, in the vnmarried life, we finde many inconueniences: Firſt, the heart is neuer ſatiſfied: if a man haue riches, honour, pleaſure, health, and fauour, yet wanting a conuenient marriage, hee is not at reſt, but deſireth that. If he be in ſickenes, the diligence and care of a wiſe is better then a phiſition. Nature biddeth him marry to increaſe his name. The world biddeth him marry to multiply mankind. The Lord biddeth him marry, to prepare ſome heyres for the kingdome of heauen: So that if nature, worlde, & religion require it, who ſhal ſpeak againſt it? Secondly, in the vnmarried eſtate, is eyther too too much ſolitarineſſe, or too too much pleaſure: the meane betweene both is marriage, where he ſhall alway finde company

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to expell sorrow, and ioyfull care to driue away ouer merry pastimes: it calleth a man to grauitie, it admonisheth of death, it sheweth the world to be vanitie, & hath no hope but in heauen. Therefore Salomon speaking of our kind, and alluding to both, saith: Hee that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and receiueth fauour of the Lord: euen so may a woman say, If she find a godly husbände, she hath a great fauour, Christ taketh greatest delight in his Church, and his Church in Christ. Such is marriage, when the hart of one resteth in another, that is the rest which is to be required. As for temporall blessings which further it: they must be sought for by diligent labour, add prayed for by faithfull supplication, because it is the Lord that giueth power to get riches, grace to vse them, and his blessing to increase them. We knowe, all the fathers so soone as their children were growen vp, they willed and wished them to marry, that their mindes might first be stayed at home, as it were the foundation, and then their actions would be wiser abroad, which would make a perfectte building. But some will say, Paul affirmeth, it is not good for a man to touche a woman, that is, to marry. I aunswere, that saying of Paul is because of troubles that are incident to mariage, by reason of the wickednesse of the worlde. The Marchant that venturith on the Sea, hath greatest gaine, & suddainest losse, not as if the sea were in fault, but because the stormes fall on the sea; euen so, if any finde their mariages bitter vnto them, let them know, the faulte is not in the thing, but in the time, place or persons: and though troubles follow it: it is but sower sawce to sweet meat: as the furnace doth purge the golde, that their loue might be manifested, their fidelitie tryed, their patience approued, and their religion (if they haue any) declared.

Pro u. 18, 2.

Deut. 8, 13.

1. Cor. 7, 1.

Againe, they will obiekt, the same Apostle sayth in the same Chapter, He that giueth to mariage doth wel, but he that giueth not to mariage doth better: therefore the vnmarried life is better then the married: To which I answere, first, he speaketh to them that haue the gifte
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of chastity, but we knowe the fewest parte are endued therewith: Secondly his speech is for those troublesome dayes of persecution, when the faithfull were in continuall troubles and feare of their liues, then was it better to die single, then leaue many helpelesse widdowes behinde, that they might the better flie in danger, bee constant in affliction, and haue no lets, or pul-backes, to keepe them from Christ: so he wisheth and protesteth, for their troubles were meanes to keepe them from marriage, in which sense the Apostle calleth it better not to marry, and yet yeeldeth the other to bee good and lawfull. But in times of peace, where there is plenty and liberty, the swelling nature will not bee appeased but onely by marriage, where the gift is not, and the Apostle saith in those daungerous times, that it was better to marrie then to burne? that is, to bee vexed with the dayly desire through the feeling of our owne necessity yet.

Thirdly, they may obiecte, that the vnmarried care for the thinges of God, but the married to please their husbandes and wiues: to the which I answere, that marriage hindereth not the seruice of God, but furthereth it in many respectes first, because a household is a little Church, where the married persons are the ministers of their families, by priuate instruction to drawe both children and seruantes, to the kingdome of heauen. Secondly, it putteth them in minde of the loue of God to them, when they loue one another: and admonisheth them of their dutes; which is to loue God againe. Thirde, they haue moe priuate blessings, as the scales of God his fauour towarde them, which also stirreth them vp to serue the Lorde. Fourthly, two are better then one: for if one be negligent in the worshippe of God, the other may whette his fellow on, and their prayers are more acceptable, because the number of them that praye is greater, and if any omitte these duties, the fault is in the persons, not in the marriage: for that is it which the Apostle Saint Paul condemneth, when cyther partie are so much inelyned to one
another

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another, that they weigh not the loue of God, & care of heauenly things, for the fondnes ouer themselves and trauaile for earthly commodities: but we must bee married, as if we were vnmarried in this respect, we must vse the world as if we vsed it not, and reioyce in the company of one another? as if we reioyced not. Therefore to conclude, mariage is honorable in al, instituted by God himselfe, obserued by the fathers before Christ, both princes, priests, and prophets commaunded by our Sauour & his Apostles to be vnderaken, that such persons as haue not the gift of continencie might marry & keepe themselves the vndefiled members of Christs mysticall body. Let vs then bee exhorted to be patient in the troubles that accompany it? for although a bitter shell doe compasse the nut, yet how sweet is the kernell that lieth within: although it haue as many miseries, as the winter hath cold dayes, yet vnspeakable is the comfort of it, to them that are equally minded. And as our labour in innocency was nothing but pleasure, which now is nothing but sorrow, So marriage was then more sweeter, though now for sinne it is become more bitter: but the hardest labour hath some profit and the poorest mariage hath much comfort. But most accursed are they which for to auoide the troubles they haue conceyued of marriage, do giue their bodies to most filthy whoredomes and wretched adulteries: Of whome Saint Paule saith, That God shall iudge them, that is vtterly condemne them: for they shall neuer be made the members of Christ, which haue incorporated them to be the members of harlots, and heyres of eternall and euerlasting damnation.

And is not Boaz.] As in the former verse wee haue hearde the diligent carefulnesse of Naomi for Ruth, to prepare her some rest, that is, a marriage. So now wee are to intreate or speake of the meanes whereby this might be accomplished which Naomi expresseth in this verse to this effect, By my daily study I haue found out a meanes whereby thou

mayest come to more continuall rest. Boaz, W whose maidens thou hast gleaned and did so curteously en- treat thee, hee is our kinsman and defendour, by the law, and euen now he is alone in the floure, winnow- ing his barley, to whome if thou wilt go, & follow my counsell, he will shew thee the way that tendeth to thy wealth.

Out of the which we gather an example of anciēt nobility, how they followed not their dayly pleasure, but continuall laboure, how they honored the wealth that God hath giuen then, with the diligent labour of their owne persons: that euen this poorest worke of winnowing and threshing as wee reade of Gedcon was not onely committed to their seruantes, but performed by themselues. Whereby we are taught that it is no such vnseemely thing, as many wold make it for men of wealth to follow their basest laboures. This Boaz had a prince to his grandfather, and he was the heire vnto all his possessions, yet here we find him alone winnowing his owne corne. We reade of Iudah the son of Iacob, a progenitour of this Bohaz, that he went in his owne person to the shearing of his sheep: and so did the sonnes of king Dauid, when Ammon was slayne by the seruants of Absolon, because hee de- filed his sister Thamar. Examples of this are more plen- tiful, thē the time will suffer me to rehearse, which are left to vs for patternes of thankfulnessse, i their diligēt labours, and witnesses of our vnworthynes in all our possessions. Adam could not dwell in paradise except in his owne person he tilled it: but many with vs, I thinke would deride him and all their fathers, if they sawe them in any thing but the gentlemans trade: for beeing hindred neither by the magistracy, nor by the ministry they had rather follow hauking or hunting gaming or playing, then at any time to foyle their hānds with their own labours, but wastig their wealth i vnprofitable pleasure, while they might increase their substance by godly trauaile. Cast away therefore this worshipfull idlenes, for men thinke nothing maketh them gentlemen but abstinence from bodily laboure, where

Iud. 6, 17.

Gen. 38. 13
2. Sam. 13.
24-

whereas that one thing is the greatest blot to our latest nobility, that they have cast off the care of their labors to others, applying their time to greater liberty, opening by idlenesse the passage to all manner of iniquitie. Remember, the fattest Oxe commeth first to the slaughter, when the labouring beast is merrie in the yoke: euen so the idlest bodies are soonest seised by sicknesse, and consumed by death: whereas labouring persons haue many daies, in somuche as it seemeth a matter of murder, by idlenesse to hasten the death of our bodies. Therefore some loathsome labour take themselves to licentious riot, & sweat out their sicknesse in vawfull pastimes, but bodily exercise profiteth little, and will rather in the end procure the paines they most of all abhorre, like the hayre of Absolon, wherein hee most delighted, with which was wrought his death. But the conclusion of all this is, that those which are the cheefest in spending, shold be the cheefest in working: the princes of the possessions, must be the principal in the labours.

2.Sa.18.9.

Wash thee therefore. These wordes contayne the preparation, which shee counselleth Ruth, before shee descend to Bohaz in the floore, that she wash her, and annoint her: Two vsuall thinges in these countries: & the meaning of Naomi is, that Ruth prepare herself in most comely manner to go down vnto him, whom she desireth to be her husband. For these actions of washing & annointing, were & are very common in those places washing, to scoure off the filth of the bodies; & annointing, to make them looke cheerefully. So we read of David, after hee had long fasted for his adulterous child, hearing it was dead, he washed and annointed himself: & as Bathshebah was washing herself, it happened that he saw her, whereby his hart was taken with her loue, & drawen fro God at one time. In somuch as we see it an vsual & accustomed thing in these daies the washing of men & women, & for annointing our Sauiour speaketh that when we fast wee annointe our sinnes, that we see me not vnto men to fast. Heere then

2.Sa.12.20

2.Sa.11.12

Mat. 6.17.

we see Naomi commaundeth Ruth no vnseemely addressing of her selfe, but such as was vsuall, and common among her owne people, and lawfull also for her to put in practise. Whereby wee first of all obserue, that comely ornaments and modest addressing of our selues, cyther of men, or women, is a thinge required of them that feare God; for the outward cleansing & washing away of the filth of our bodies, being the fauour of sinne raigning in vs: in somuch as it is a brutish thing, to goe in their bodyes (as many will) without all respect of person or humanitie, handes spotted, face besmeared, countenance disfigured; and their naturall complexion defaced in them, through their daily vnciuill and vnnaturall behauiour and negligence, who by their cruell labouring to get the world, looke the comfort of their owne bodies, while in swinish attire they wallow in the company of God and men.

Secondly, by this we gather, that the Lorde hath giuen the frutes of the earth, as wel for our ornament, as for our nourishment; because it is as necessarie in some respectes for the comelinesse of the body, that to be raysed vp to handsomnesse, being nourished as that it shoulde be nourished being weake. Therefore

Psa. 104. 15 faith Dauid. With wine hee refresheth the hearte of man; and hee hath giuen oyle to make him haue

14. a cheerefull countenance: and in the verse before hee faith, He maketh the grasse to grow for the beast, & the greene hearbe for the vse of man; not simply for the meate but for the seruice or vse of man. And notable is the history of a woman, that came to annoint our sauour before his death, that powred on him a

Mar. 14. 34 rich and costly boxe of ointment, and he excused her, and commended her for it. And it was an vse in olde time to annoint the bodies of them that were dead, as wee may see how those three women, Mary Magdalen,

Mar. 16. 1. and Mary the mother of Iames, and also Salome, came to anoynt the body of Christ lying in the graue. If this was lawfull to bee done to the deade carcases, much more is it to the liuing bodyes of God his

Saints

Saints.

And here by the way wee may profitably describe, what is to be thought of starching, because the godly are much troubled therewith: for some thinke it vtterly vnlawfull, some suppose it to bee indifferent, but other imagine it to be necessary: and euerie one of those do mutually condemne one another: Therefore let vs heare the reasons that are brought against it if they bee weightie receiue them, if light: & of littell force, wee will leaue it to the discretion of the faithfull.

First they saue against it that it consumeth the graine of wheat whereof it is made, so that the same which was ordayned for foode, is transferred to another vse, which is vnlawfull. To which I answer, so was oyle ordayned for nourishment as well as wheate, yet the godly might take that most comfortable creature, and apply it to the adorning and setting forth of their bodies: which was lawfull for them, and therefore the other for vs, if it be sparingly vled. But they will say, oyle was applyed to the body, but this is onely in the apparell, therefore the reason of them is not alike: To which I answer: that which is done to the apparell, is done to the body, because it is done for the bodies sake, as we reade of Izaacke, which smelled the sauour of Esaus garments, that Iacob wore when he got the blessing, & vpon that pronounced his blessing. Gen. 37.29

But they reply againe, and say it maintaineth pride and therefore is vnlawfull: but I answer, it is harde to condemne, except we knew the hart, for that is the seat of pride and not of apparell. Again, if any do so abuse it they more offende in that by a thousand parts, then if the thing in it selfe were vtterly vnlawfull: therefore the fault lieth in the persons, not in the manner of addressing themselves.

But they obiekt againe, That it is a great losse of time, for it asketh much more labour then simple washings but I answer, so did his annointing

and if the reason be good against the one, it auaileth also against the other: so that of the three former iudgments, I thinke it in the meane to bee indifferent. And thus in a word, and briefly I haue touched it as a thing not worth anie farther handling, and haue vterred my poore iudgment in the same, in the behalfe of them that indifferently vse it, because some haue flaunderously giuen out, that none but proude and singular persons vse it, others haue scornfully answered, that none but precise fooles mislike it. But let vs in the spirite of meekenes and gentlenes neither condemne them that vse it, nor contemne those that doe forbid it. Neither doe I speake this to perswade any to imbrace it, whose consciences haue allwaies beene against it. but I charitably desire them, to beare with their brethren, and in these vnnecessary trifles, to suffer all the faithfull to enioy their christian liberty. But especially let vs learne to praise the Lord, which hath thus carefully and plentifully provided for vs euery way, outwardly in our bodies, making his creatures to comfort vs: and inwardly in our soules, giuing his owne spirit to bee the earnest of our saluation: that wee might want nothing to draw vs away from his maiestie; but in all thanke giuing to walke before him in the profession of the Gospell being compassed about with the helpes of this life, as Elisha was with the mountaines of Angels: that the comfortles sorrowes of worldly miseries may neuer driue vs to desperation,

And put thy garments. This is the seconde thing which Naomi willeth Ruth in her preperation to go downe to Boaz, for first as shee commaunded her to dresse her body: so now shee willeth her to put on her best apparrell, as the goodliest ornaments of her body: for we must not imagin, that Ruth went naked in the house, although she bid her put on her apparrell; but her meaning is, that shee should put on her best apparel that euery way she might be furnished to deale with so noble a personage, & so weighty a cause: Out of the which we note.

First, another duty of humanity, that if God giue any blessing vnto vs, we should also be carefull in these bodies of sinne, to prouide for our selues change of apparrell. For we know after Adam had sinned, the first thing he thought on, was somewhat to couer his nakednes. By the which we may learne that the first entraunce or occasio of clothing was giuen by sinne that we might couer the shame of our bodies, for if Adam had continued in his estate of innocencie, there had beene no shame of nakednes, no cause of garmets no feare of cold, or terreur of heate, and therefore before all things he sowed some figg leaues together, for the hiding of his offence, but God made them garments of skins. So then we must be very carefull for the conscience of sinne, that we couer our bodies with outward apparrell, which indeede is a tipe or shew, how our soules must be clothed wth Iesus christ. For this cause it was vsuall in ancient time, that they not onely provided simplie a garment for the present necessitie, but many changes, for their bodies commodities. And as the world grew, so sinne increased, & as sinne increased, the miseries of our bodies multiplied: like a ruinous house that euery day falleth to decay more and more. Therefore more helps were inuented in the dayes of Abraham, then in the life of Adam: and more in the time of Moyse then in Abrahames, and more in Salomons, then in all the residue or former: for as y^e sore spreades it selfe, so the salue must be lengthned now the ayre is intemperate, the earth vnfruitfull, the bodies of mākind molested by a thousand diseases and euery herbe which was the first mā's nourishment, is our surfet: in so much as the auoyding of all these must be carefully prouided by lawfull deuises. Which the fathers ordayned and appointed by longe experience, to bee not a littell holpe by the change of aparrell. And here wee see these poore people haue this benefite for their bodies, as well as the rich,

Now, because in some the excessse hereof is so great, that they passe all humanity: and in other the want is so indecent, that it shameth mankind to see their brethren goe so basely: Some being able, yet like asses laden with much wealth, they haue no power to bestow it on themselves or other: againe, manie poore soules, which haue nothing to prouide, or to couer them, are neglected by them that are able: Therefore, in this place we must set downe some rules out of the worde of God, to take away all these extremities.

And the first thing that must bee knowne, is the cause for which it is not onelie needefull, but also lawfull to prouide apparrell which allready we haue shewed you to be the sinne of Adam which wrought in vs the shame of our naked bodyes, and brought vpon vs cold and heat, sicknes and soares, surfets and death: so then the bodies couered by clothing are made comely againe, are armed against heate, warmed against colde, strengthened against sicknes, and the dayes of health lengthned, life prolonged, and death auoyded: For as the prisoner looking vpon his irons, thinketh vpon his theft, so euery one when he seeth his garments, must thinke on his sinnes. And this one consideration striketh down all deuises of fashions, or conceits of pride: For alas what glory hath the theefe in his bands, or what profite by their making? for now he is clogged with them, but anone he is tucked vp with the halter: so proude persons are nowe pranked vp while they looke on their feathers, but anone are paid for their fashions wth eternal damnation. For the Lord crieth out by the prophet that he will take vengeance of the princes & the sonnes of the king, for vsing straggap, arrell.

Zeph. i. 8.

Mat. 6. 30

Secondly, there may be a difference of apparrell, one kind for the rich, another for the poore, one for the prince, another for the people. one for the noble man, and another for the gentleman: for our sauour speaking of the royalty of Salomon in all his apparrell doeth

doth not discommend it: and wee haue hearde already of the apparell of Esau lying in his father Isaacks house. And this may be also in many sutes; as Iacob had sent him by his sonne Ioseph, and Ioseph gaue his bretheren to euery one garmentes, but to Benjamin hee gaue siue chaunges. But some will say, our Sauiour biddeth vs not to haue two coates, and therefore this chaunge is vnlawfull: To which I aunswere, that it is vnlawfull to possesse chaunge, or varietie of garmentes, when wee see and behold our brother hath none: therefore our Sauiour Christ addeth, that hee that hath two coats must giue to him that hath none: So that our aboundance must neuer be to the want & necessitie of our brethren.

Gen. 27. 29

But alas, where is this difference in manner of garmentes? I speake for the matter wherefore they are made: wee may make the olde complaint of a christian father, a thing woorthy to be scene, yea rather to be lamented: The maide followeth the mistresse in such brauery of apparell, that it is harde to know whether maide or mistris goeth formost. Such confusion of degrees, consuming of wealth and goods, condemning the humble, and aduancing of base persons by apparell into the place of worthy men, is the overthrowe and destruction of a whole country, the ruine of a common wealth, and the defacing of the Church of Christ. But all this while the naked may goe naked still, for any clothing they can get of these that haue such plentie and aboundance: so that men cloth themselves in the finest silkes, feede themselves with the fastest calues, and ease themselves in the softest beddes, while Christ in his members is harbourlesse without houses, hungry without breade, and naked without any raiment to cast vpon him. Oh woe be to you dainty persons, that thus prouide for your own mayntenance, and neglect the sustenance of the poore: you are clothed in soft and gorgeous apparell, and fare deliciously euery daye: you eate vp the needy like breade: **Exec. 16. 9** you are deafe at their cries, blinde at their naked-

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Luc. 17. 18. nesse, and like the citizens of Sodome, vnmercifull to their myseries: consider that their eating and drinking brought brimstone from heauen, with fire to burne vp their Citties and soules. Consider the ende of that rich glutton in the Gospell, which was so tormented in the paines of hell, that hee desired but a drop of water, & could not obtaine it. Your brauery shall bee turned into shame, your pride into paynes, your ease into restles trouble, your aboundance into euerlasting want, your friendes into Deuils, your honour into hell, your vnmercifull harts into vn sufferable plagues, and your pleasures repayed with eternal destruction both of body and soule. The like may be said of those couetous persons, which go as farre vnder their calling as other aboue, and will hardly bestowe any garmentes on themselves worth the wearing, and disgrace the proportion of mankind through their base apparell, and vnreuerent addressing themselves, without all respecte of honestie, regarde of religion, conscience of their places, and knowledge of the true vse of the benefites of God. But many spende all that they can gette vpon their bellies, neuer caring howe simply they go in the face of the worlde, so they haue any thinge to couer their nakednesse, and we knowe what kinde of beasts are the punishment of such slouthfulnes. Therefore let vs euery one helpe those that are not able to provide, yea and to buy them apparel: and let vs all learn hereby what care wee ought to haue of the change of our bodies, that if wee will be ruled by the example of the godly, wee must rather studie and trauaile for our couering; then for our nourishing: Therefore wee muste pray for our cloathing of him that doatheth the Lillies of the fiede, in such measure as wee may bee comforted, our nakednes couered, our shame abated, our comelynes adorned, and the sauour of sinne expelled, that wee myght prayse his power for euer more.

Secondly, by this we may also note, what reuerence, we owe to magistrates, and to men in authoritie, that

we must be carefull in their presence to giue no offence euen in our apparell, for heere wee see Ruth going to Boaz, an elder of Bethlehem, she is commaunded by Naomi to put on her best apparell, as a duty of all the faithfull, that they make not their presence odious in the sight of their rulers, and for this cause we read in stories, that when any were wont to come before the magistrates hauing any sute vnto them, they were apparelled with white, which signified the innocency of the person and purity of the cause? and also they had one suit, that in all decent manner they might deliuer their mindes in the presence of the maiestrate: for the basenes of apparell, is loathsomnesse to many. But this shall suffice for the touching of this matter.

Let not the man. After shee had commaunded her to prepare her selfe, shee descendeht to instruct her of her behauiour: after shee commeth downe to the place; which was this, that shee let not him knowe of her till he had supped, and were gone to lie downe in his bed, which shee aduertiseth her diligently to marke, and to come and bestowe her selfe at his feete. Where it may seeme that Naomi counselleth her daughter an vnlawfull thinge, yea rather to play the whoore, then to get her a husband by a lawfull meanes: for shee biddeh her to trimme and smooth her selfe vp, shee warneth her not to come to the man till he were layde to his rest, and finally shee counselleth her to lye downe at his feete. Truly in outward shewe it seemeth vnlawful, yet in substance very honest if we consider euery circumstance. First I demaund, what is it that seemeth dishonest in this whole discourse? some will say, first the dressing of her selfe is scant the parte of an honest woman, for it is verie likely, Naomi had this intention, by this meanes, to drawe the olde man in loue with her, for shee tooke him as it were at aduantage alone in the floore, and such saith Salomon is the parte of whoores. I aunswere, that them other of Salomon saith, that it is also the point of a wise and a godly womā to watch in the night, to be finely appareled, to clothe her household and such like. Therefore seeing

Pro. 7. 9. 10

11.

Pro. 31. 10.

&c. 21.

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an honest woman may do these thinges. Ruth did no dishonestie in this. Againe, this kinde of dressing in Ruth was needfull, because shee had to deale with an honorable man, and therefore the more carefully and comely shee must appeare in hys presence. But you will say, that Naomi had some such meaning, because shee bid her that shee shoulde not let her selfe be knowne till the man were gone to his: I aunswere, this shee did, that they might more freely talke together of the matter of her mariage, for if shee had come before hee went to supper, the day would not haue sufficed to commune of the cause of her comming, neither would the old man haue gone to his lodging, if he had known a woman to bee present. Then, you will say, why dyd shee not come to his owne house at home, and that in the day time? I aunswere, because it was a reproch to Ruth to be knowne to deale publicly in her owne marriage, whych muste needes bee knowne if it had beene done in the City, or in the day time: and therefore seeing time and place were nowe conuenient, the man being alone, they tooke opportunity by the forelock, and prepared themselues for the aduenture of her mariage.

Why then, will some say, what mooued Naomi to giue such counsell vnto Ruth, seeing shee knewe it might bee defamed? I aunswere, Naomi knewe Boaz to bee an olde man, not giuen to suche lewde and filthy conditions, but especyally shee knewe him to feare God, and Ruth her daughter in lawe to bee a vertuous woman, & trusting to his age, and both their godlinesse, shee is emboldened to giue this aduise. And this may suffice any sober mindes, from suspition of Naomies counsell, Ruthes dishonesty, or the religion of Boaz. But some will saye, If the matter bee so cleare as you will make it, then maye wee also followe the example and doe the like. To which I aunswere, if any doo so, it is much amisse: for wee must not imitate euerye example wee reade of in the scripture, as that of Rebeccaes counsell to her sonne Iacob, whereby hee got away the blessing from

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Now, There is no cause that can moue vs, as there was Naomi, for Ruth must bee married in her kindred, we neede not: she was bound to one or twaine, but wee are free to manye thousandes: shee might challenge in her owne behalfe, for the law of God, but wee cannot doe so, excepte there bee a promise of marriage: therefore neyther must wee followe thys example, nor yet suspect the actions of either.

And Ruth. Now the counsell propounded, and the meanes for the execution thereof declared, Ruth approueth her mothers aduise, by promise of obedience, thar first she woulde do it, and in the verse. 6, she doeth performe it. Where we haue a good example, in the matter of marriage for all children to depende vpon their godly and religious parents. If any aske mee, whether they be bound vpon necessity so to obey their parents, that if they offer them husbands or wiues they cannot refuse them, but their parents may compell them: to whome I answere, first if it bee possible hearken to the voyce of thy parents, but if thou canst not, thy parents cannot commaund thee against thy minde, for they must propounde it conditionally, not absolutely. In thy body (concerning thy laboure) thou must obey them in all things, because they are the parents of thy body, but thy minde or soule which commeth from God, is alway at liberty. so that disobedience to parents is the refusing of their temporall commaundement, but marriage is euerlasting to the death of man.

Secondly children may refuse, because the Lord many times reuealeth that to the childe which he shewed not to the parents: as wee may see in the example of Sampson, when he would marry with a philistine woman, for his parents gaine saying it, the scripture sheweth the reason of it, because they knew it not to come from the Lord: but Sampson did, & therfore stood in it & his parents hearkened vnto him in y^e end & got him y^e womā for his wife. By the which wee gather

Ind. 143.
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gather, that no children may lawfully celebrate their marriage without the parents consent. secondly that they must be very circumspect to marry their children: thirdly that they cannot in any good conscience deny their consents to their children to keepe them from honest marriage if there be any equality between the parties or hope of honesty in the time of louing.

But of this matter we haue often spoke
and therefore this shall suffice for this time

Now let vs giue praise
to God.

The end of the eight
Lecture.

And



The ninth Lecture

Chap. 3. ver. 7. 8. 6. 10. 11. 12. 13.

And when Boaz had eaten and drunken and made his hart merry he went and laied downe beside the heap of corne. And shee came softly and vncouered the place of his feet and lay downe.

And at midnigh the man was afraide, and turned himselfe higher and thither: and behold a woman lay at his feet.

To whome he said, who art thou? and shee saide I am Ruth thy handmaide, spread the wing of thy garment ouer thy hand and aide, for thou art the kinsman.

Which said, Blessed be thou of the Lord my daughter, for thou hast performed more kindness, at the last then at the first; because thou followdest not young men, were they poore or rich.

Now therefore my daughter, feare not, whatsoeuer thou saiest I will doe vnto thee, for euery one within the gates of my people knowe th thee to be a vertuous woman.

Now indeede it is true that I am thy kinsman yet there is one neerer then I.

Sleepe here this night, in the morning if hee will doe the part of a kinsman let him; but if he will, not doe the kinsmans duty, I will doe the kinsmans duty, as the Lord liueth sleepe vntill the morning,



OW it followeth, in this scripture to speake of the effect of this counsell, and of those things that hapned, after Ruth came downe into the floote: and the happy successe shee had with Boaz: The words doe easily deuide themselues into two parts, the first respecteth Boaz the other Ruth.

The first part concerning Boaz, is that which he did after his worke, and before his sleepe ver. 7. that hee

he ate and dranke and made his heart merry, and lay downe beside his corne. For that he did after his sleepe, verse 8. First he feared when hee felre a woman at his feet: and secondly, hee asketh who shee was. After he knew her, he blessed her, verse. 11. In these words feare not my daugheer. His comfort hath 3. parts: First his confession that he was her kinsman verse, 12. Secondly, the counsell he giveth to her verse, 13 to tarry vntill the morning, and then he wold try her other kinsman: if she refused, Boaz promiseth by oath to confirme hir right, and doe her kinsmans duty: and therefore biddeth her to sleepe vntill the morning.

The second part which concerneth Ruth, is her behauiour after shee came to the place appointed, and hath these two branches: first that which shee did alone verse, 7. That shee came and lay downe at his feet: secondly, that which shee did with Boaz: first shee telleth him her nãe when shee perceiued the man was afraid: secondly, shee sheweth him her petition, desiring him to spreade the winge of his garment ouer her, verse 9. Of these partes let vs speake in order as they lye, by the assistance of the spirit of God and permission of the time.

And when Boaz: These words concerne Boaz and that which hee did after his worke the day being ended and his bodie being wearied, he went to his meat, eating and drinking refreshing his stomack and cheering his heart with those blessings of God which he had present: afterwards getting him to his lodging at the end of his corne; in sted of a softer bed he harboureth vpon the straw. Out of the which we obserue these thinges

First, the blessing of God vpon his creatures, that are moderately taken: for it is saide that hee cheared his hearte after his eating and drinking: his bodie was not onely nourished, his hunger abated, and his stomacke filled, but also his hearte was cheered

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cheered thereby: as if the holyc Ghost had saide, Heere
is my blessing vppon meate that is moderately re-
ceiued, that the powers of the soule are refreshed by **Ecd. 10. 17.**
it: therefore wee reade in the preacher, that a whole
lande is blessed by the moderate receiuing of these
benefites in eating and drinking. The experience
whereof is playnely prooued euery daye among vs.
For what is the fruite of this immoderate deuour-
ing the benefites of God, but as Salomon sayth, the **Pro. 23. 29.**
corruption of the body, the swelling and rednes of the
eyes, woundes without cause, quarrels and contenty-
ons to the woe of manye: wherein they that re-
ioyce are voyde of all reason, which ought to be the
grounde of all our mirth. but like beastes some from
feeding to sleeping conueye themselues: other
from eating to gaming turne their bodyes, delightyng
in nought but vanitie, being as farre from this cheere-
fulness of hearre by theyr meate and nourishment, as
Nabal was after his feaste, when one worde of Da-
uids anger stroke his heart dead. But this Boaz was
heere alone and none beside him: and yet you see, that
in his solitary barne voide of companions, hee made
himselfe merry, with the fellowshippe of the blessing
of God vppon hys meate. Euen so assuredly, if the
handes of many coulde guide theyr mouthes, their
mouthes rule their appetites, and both were gouerned
with the spirite of God, that they receiued for strength
to nourishe their weakenes, not for gluttony to stuf-
f vppon theyr stomackes, they shoulde with greater com-
fort sit downe to their meales, and exceeding ioyfully
lyse vp againe. But since our mindes haue as manye
deuises, as our stomackes receyue morsels, we eate &
yet wee are not satisfied, wee drinke and yet wee
are not merrie: but overcome with the good crea-
tures of God, wee seeke after idle songes, vayne iest-
ing, and vnprofitable fables of falsehoode, and forged
conceytes in vngodly bookes, which draweth our
spirituall

spirituall ioy, and plungeth our mindes in the gulfe of worldly mirth and woefull misery, Then let vs learne the wisdom of Christ, and looke for ioye which standeth not in laughter, but in the inwarde comfort of the assurance of the spirite, being perswaded we feede in y^e presence of God, we may haue Christ at our temporall and worldly meales that we may eat & drinke with him in his euermore kingdome.

Secondly, by this wee obserue, that our meate after our labours is much more ioyfull to our hearts and profitable to our bodies, then if it bee receiued in an idle life: for Boas had wrought hard all this daye, and the reward of his labour is the worke of his meate, which in the end of all maketh his heart merry. I consideration whereof, the Lorde inflicted this as a punishment vpon mankinde, that their meate shoulde bee vnprofitable vlesse it were eaten in the sweate of our browes: for as sleepe to a man that hath long watched, so is meate to a man that hath long laboured, & as the coursing of the Hart maketh him to breath for the water spring; so labour causeth men to hunger more vehemently, to eat more liberally and digest more effectually their desired morsels. We read of Ionathan the sonne of king Saul, when hee had wearied himself in the slaughter of the Philistines, & being very hungry did but dippe the toppe of his batte in a hony combe, and putting it to his mouth, his eyes receiued sight: so acceptable are the crammes and drops to them that labour, that they restore the life & power of the body, and for this cause the greatest persons in the first and purest age (when the life of man was many hundred yeeres) were not exempted from bodily labour. On the other side, as Salomon saith, they which sit long at wine and seeke after strong drinke, meaning those which with idlenesse followe their bellies are more noysome to the worlde, vnwholesome to themselves, and woefull for euermore: for their end will be as the byting of a serpent and the stinging of a cockatrice: teaching vs that labouring mens morsels are most sweet: & if we should ioyfully recreate our selues

Gen. 3. 19.

Psa. 42. 1.

1. Sa. 14. 27

Pro. 23. 20.

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In the benefites of God, we must dilligently prepare our stomacks in some honest trauailes that the basest fare may be acceptable meate vnto vs: for the health of the body is preserued by laboure, as the plāted corne by the dilligence of the husbandman: for he which tilleth the earth is satisfied with bread, but idlenes is neereſt kinsman to madneſſe. Against this we haue often ſpoken heretofore, and let this ſuffiſe for this time.

Pro. 12. 14

Thirdly me muſt note, what manner of mirth or cheerefulnes was this of Boaz, it could not be in talkig for he was alone, nor yet in ieſting, for the former reaſon: nor yet was it in outward ſinging, for it is ſaid his heart was cheerefull, as if there were a mirth that were not outward. And truly, where the holy Ghoſt dwelleth, there abideth this inward ioy. Which proceedeth from it as a ſtreame from a fountaine, or heate from a fire. Saule could be merry when Dauid played on his harpe, the king of Babilon was merry in the middeſt of his delicacies, Aſſuerus was merry among his princes, & Naboll was merry in the middeſt of his reapers: but what maketh the godly merry among the wilde beaſts, ioyfull in the dungeons of the earth, and ſing hartly when they receiue browne bread? nothing but this ioy of Boaz, which is the ioy of the holy Ghoſt. This maketh men ioyfull in death, merry in miſery, and leaping vnder the yoke of Chriſtian troubles: which all princes in the world cannot do vpon their thrones of maiestie, this is mixed wth no feare, becauſe it proceedeth from ſo excellent a root. Why doe men meruaile, ſo many godly perſons liue ſo ſolitarily? the birde had rather be in the wildernes alone, then with thouſandes of other fellowes ſitting in a cage, & the godly are moſt merry when they are fartheſt from worldly company. If the godly be a company together, this their ioy muſt bee expreſſed by ſinging of pſalmes as Iames ſaith, & our ſauour with his diſciples praſtiſed this at his laſt ſupper, for whē they had done, they ſung a pſalm, and went into the mount of oliues, yea euen then when Chriſt had prophesied of his death, & they were

Rom 14. 17

Eph. 5. 22.

1. Sam. 16.

24

Dan. 5. 4

Eſt. 1. 10.

1. Sam. 25.

56.

Iam. 5. 13

Mar. 14

sorrowfull, yet this inward and spirituall ioy was not extinguished: wherein we see an excellent commendatiō of singing after meat, that it might bee an outwarde testimony of our inward ioye. This striketh downe all foolish talking for stirring vppe of mirth, and answereth to them that say, if they follow not vaine pastimes they cannot be merry: Truly that pleaseth the flesh, but displeaseth the spirit: and let them assure the selues whosoever they bee, that this temporall and wanton sporting will bring vpon them euclasting lamenting. But some will say, is this singing and mirth at tables commendable, seeing the prophete speaketh so against it: They sing to the viole, and frame to them selues songes like the songes of David, &c. I answer, all curiositie and pleasure in outward singing at our feastings is forbidden by the prophete, which hee doeth notablie describe in the same place by these markes. First, when it is vsed to forget their sinnes, and to driue away the terrors of their consciences.

Amo. 6. 5. 6

Verse. 3

Verse. 4.

Verse. 6.

Secondly, when it is added for pleasure and ease. Thirdly, that with greedier appetites, they might deuoure their meat and drinke, to draw away their mindes frō the remembrance of the Lord. Fourthly, such mirth as maketh them forget the afflictions of the church of God. If any desire mirth for these causes, the woe of the prophete taketh holde vpon them.

And surely here is condemned all playing on instruments and singing at table when we eate our meate, as a thing against which the prophete much aymeth, and is too much vsed amonge vs here in Englande, for nothing maketh vs more readily to forget the affliction of Ioseph then that doeth: when two occasions of mirth are ioyned together, meat and musicke, it is like two diuers plaisters laide to one wounde, which by their vehemente operation, increase the sore. In like manner we are more apt to be made worse then to be amended by the benefites

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of God. For as too much rayne drowneeth and ouerfloweth, and too much drought chippeth and cleaueth the earth: so too much mirth & pleasure ouercometh the heart of man, This I speake not to discommende musicke, which I acknowledge freely, with all the godly, to be holy and lawfull: but I exhort and admonish, that it may not be vsed at the present time of eating, but sparingly before or after our feasting. And let vs all chuse rather to sing one Psalm from a feeling spirite, with a grace in our heartes and mindes, then to heare a thousande songes vpon instrumentes of pleasant musicke, without inward comforte.

He went to lye downe.. Now we are come to the seconde parte of that which he did alone, which in these wordes is declared to be the choise of his lodging, at y^e end or one side of his corne. Where we note another vsage or custome of auncient nobility: in steade of a pallace, they had a cottage: in steede of attendors and waitors, they had the instrumentes of their labours: & as this Boaz, a heape of strawe, in steade of a bed of downe: such as his toyle and labour was, such is his lodging: a harde worke, a harde bed: For hee that is wearied with traualle or labour, can sleepe and quietly take his rest on the grasse. And this putteth vs in minde of the estate of all our forefathers many yeeres agoe, before this softnesse and tendernesse was inuented, they were glad wee see, though they were greates Lordes, yet to be labourers: And although their possessions excelled ours, yet they had lesse bodylie ease then wee: for the richest and highest estate of dignity is not the quietest life. By the which wee are admonished; with all kindnesse, to harbour the poore and needy though it bee but in a padde of strawe, considering they be the images of the ancient nobilitie, who were contented with the like entertainment: & the poore are exhorted with patience to abide their tedious traualles and harde lodgings, seeing the Lordes of the worlde,

had no better estate; they which had most wealth had least ease, and wee which haue scant one mans inheritance among twenty, do peaceably enioy more worldlie securitye. And truelye this maketh vs to feele, that euerye commoditie is tempered with some molestation: y Israelites being deliuered from Pharaos thought they were well, but then they were dryuen to goe thorough the bottome of the sea, and being come to the lande of Canaan, they found many enemyes, and did not ouercome them all, till the raigne of Dauid: so that euery pleasure is mingled with some worldlie sorrowe: they which vse the sea get much wealth, but yet with great danger, and they which are on the land, are in safety though not in such welth. And thus must wee frame our mindes, that when wee enioy the ende of our desires, yet it bringeth with it alway some occasion of dislike: therefore it is better to bee contented with hard fare then discontented with dainty cheere, to like in harde harbour then dislike in the softest beds: and better is a little thing with a quiet minde, then the possession of a kingdome with the trouble thereof.

And Ruth came: Boaz being weary with his labours, and sufficed with his meate, no doubt but being quietly layde a sleepe had soone taken him: and Ruth, when she espied a conuenient time, came, and conueyed her selfe softly to the place of hys feete, which at midnight was perceiued by Boaz and not before. For shee so layde herselfe, as hee being awaked, might quicklye espye her: whereby we see the occasion that moued Naomi to counsell Ruth to come so neere him, which was this, that Boaz might first be griued and then should Ruth best vtter her suite. But of all this we haue spoken before, and therefore to the petition of Ruth.

Spreade the wings. Ruth omitting no opportunitye, so soone as shee had vttered her name, shee putteth vp her petition, and by a figuratiue speeche desireth him to bee her husbände and defendour. For, to spread the wings, we knowe, is taken from birds

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who keepe their young ones vnder their winges. And this speech of Ruth to Boaz is indeede to intreate him to bee her husband : for wee reade the sence of these wordes to bee spoken to Sara by Abimelech the king of Gerar, that her husbände Abraham shoulde bee vnto her a couer against all those that woulde oppresse her. And therefore in ancient time, women were wont to bee couered in the presence of their husbands: And Ruth saith to Boaz, spreade thy winge ouer mee, that is, bee thou my husbände to couer mee : for in times paste it was a thing very odious to bee without husbändes, euen as odious as to bee starke naked, or a maisterles dogge, as the prouerbe is : Which appeareth by that complaint of the prophet Esay, That seuen women shoulde laye holde vppon one man and desire to bee called by hys name, promising to prouide their owne liuing. So that this figuratiue speecche doeth most notablie describe the duetye of husbändes towarde their wiues. First the wing signifieth protection, for it is the duetye of husbändes to defende their wiues, to be able and willing to shield them from iniuries, prouide for them necessities, couer them in dangers, minister to them comfort and strength in their weakenes. But truelye it is pittye to see what married men wee haue in these dayes, and howe lytle commoditie manye helpeles wiues receiue by theyr rechelesse husbändes, that surely they are driuen with Abigail manye tymes to shifte for their own liues and the liues of their families. These roisting companyons, hastye and headye husbändes which for euerye lyght occasion forsake their famylies, or weary their wiues with their presence, minister neither couering nor comforte, according to theyr bounden duetye : but lyke periured and forsworne caytifes, that haue falsified theyr sayth to God, the Church, and theyr wiues, runne headlong to theyr owne destruction and decaye of their posteritie. Oh howe sorrowfull is the estate of women, if they be not supported with the kindenes of their yoke-fellowes. Bea-

Gen. 20, 16.

Esa. 4. 1.

Psa. 63, 7.

ring of children is nothing in comparifon of this: for that is their deferved punifhment of God; but the other the intollerable hande of the Deuill. Wee reade, that the Pellicane will teare out her owne breafte to feede her younge ones: but wee reade of fewe fowle kinde as to feede vpon their young ones, faue onely thefe vnaturall husbandes. We read that the Storkes are alwaies fedde fo long by theyr younge ones when they are olde, as they nourifhed them when they were younge. But thefe godlefle fathers care neyther for to nourifh their little ones being young, nor how they fhall be maintained when they are olde.

Finally, by this, wiues are inſtructed their obedience to their husbandes, that as the little birde is at the call of his damme, fo wiues muſt be ready at the becke of their husbandes. And let vs looke vpon the brute beaſtes for examples of lues, who in theyr brutiſhe kinde condemne our humanitie. The Emmet laboureth and prouideth for winter: that condemneſt fluggardes. The Aſſe knoweth his owner, and the Ox his maiſters cribbe: Theſe condemne vnthankfulneſſe to God. The Doves teach vs innocency, the Serpents wiſdome, the dogges watchfulneſſe, the Foxes warineſſe, the Lyons courage, and the little birds our duties to wiues and children. Therefore let vs not be more gracelefle then theſe, leaſt their diligence, like the voice of Balaams Aſſe, condemne our diſobedience to perpetuall miſery.

Bleſſed bee thou of the Lorde. Nowe commeth the ſeconde parte of the conference betweene Bohaz and Ruth to bee handled: wherein onely Bohaz ſpeaketh. And firſt of all, hee bleſſeth or prayeth for her, ſaying. *Bleſſed bee thou of the Lord, for this latter fauour is greater then the former*: Then thou forſookeſt thy Country to come with thy mother in lawe, but nowe thou forſakeſt younge and youthfull husbandes to come to mee a diſeaſed olde man: neither wealth nor pouerty can alter or chaunge thy minde, from following the

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commaundement of God to thy owne hinderance So in this example we haue an excellent patterne of true and vsfayned religion, which is this: when Ruth is obedient to the ordinaunce of God, euen in that which seemeth to her owne discommoditie and earthly consolation: for shee was a young woman, and therefore by nature desired a young companion, and not to bee troubled with a withered old man; from whome shee could receiue but littell bodyly comfort: yet because by the law shee wastied to her neereft kinsman of her deceased husband: forsaking all other, shee cleaueth to him, making the lawe her choise, his age her honour, and the triall of his former curtesie, as bandes of assurance for his future kindnes. This was the faith of Ruth, that caused her like Leui to forsake his custome: like Zacheus to depart from his wealth: like the courtiers of Herod to forgoe their honour, and also the saints of God to forsake their dearest frendes, to follow the voyce of the Gospell.

Luc. 5. 28.
& 19. 8. 9
Act. 13. 17

And this teacheth vs, to cast of earthly commodities in worldly busines, to forsake nature and naturall affection, to forgoe life and liuing, and account all thinges but dunge in regard of obedience to the word of God: This is it that toucheth the quicke, and will proue the heart of euery christian. If this conditiō were propounded, Christ saith: That for him wee must forsake all that wee haue: Now, if this law were made, that whosoever went to hearing of the worde, should presently confiscate his goodes at the pleasure of the law maker: Who would in this case bee obedient rather to the bare voyce of Christ, then to the threatening wordes of the lawe. Examine beloued, and then arrayne euery man his owne hearte for this poynt and you shall see, whether the loue and desire of the worlde hath not droue out the loue of the father. Euery dastarde will offer and make shew to fight hardely, till he come to approach the felde, but in the face of the enemye if he abide, there is the triall:

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may if he see but one way to escape hee will surely take that, though it bee to his owne discredite. So I feare mee, I feare mee, many, if danger were woulde not onely turne from vs, but fight hotly against vs for all their fare faces to vs. They which now will hardly of one hundred pounds giue one to y^e Gospell, will not then leaue the principall to follow the truth: but as the glare-worme doeth not glister but in the night, so true christians will not be knowne, till the daies of darkenes & error come, whē these dissembling hypocrites shall bee found to bee nothing but rotten wood, good for nothing. But to come to Ruth, shee performeth her promise to God, as David saith, though it be to her owne hindrance, shee knoweth it wth the apostles, better to obey God then men, to follow Christ and not the flesh, for the world it selfe shall bee shortly consumed, and then the louers thereof shall bee vitterly condemned. Oh, let vs then practise the deniall of our selues before the time of triall come, let vs as the martyrs did, trie the burning of our fingers, before we venter our whole bodies: let vs giue some of our wealth to the poore now, rather then keepe all to bee spoiled by the wicked Apostataes then: but how will men doe this at that fiery triall, when now in peace they will forsake and forswear the Lord, some for their marchandise, other for rents and reuenues, some to bring the poore Nabaothes into destruction, many for worldly profite and temporall gaine: but this queene of worldly desire shall one day be meate for the dogges: when it shall be saide, that happy are all you that in wealth and pouerty, haue followed the sonne of righteousness in sincerity.

Feare not my daughter.

His prayer and the reason thereof being ended, now followeth the consolation hee giueth to Ruth, in these wordes bidding her to cast away feare, for whatsoeuer lyeth in his power he would doe: for the whole city would

testifie

Psal. 134.
Act. 4. 19.

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testifie the estate of her person, and vprightnes in her liuing: and therefore he should be much to blame, if hee decayed so lawfull a request. Out of the which we note.

First, here is set downe the duety of all magistrates, which is with meeknes and gentlenes to heare the petitions of their suitors: for Boaz was a publike person, or els Naomi had complayned to the magistrate, but himselfe being a godly elder, the sute is first priuately handled with him. Therefore they must follow the example of Boaz here declared, which is with the kindest words to intreat them, and iust iudgements to proceed for them, alway yeelding to equitie where the cause is required. For our Sauour accompteth a magistrate that is contrary minded, as eyther to feare God not to respect man: that is such one is hated of God and man: For if magistrates loue God or regard their subiects, they must bee easily intreated by the voyces of their suitors. Therefore is that euerlasting commendation of Moyles. *¶* he sat in the doore of his tent in iudgment fro euening vntil morning, where all *¶* people might freely haue access to his presence, and godly conference with his person, the which all the iudges in christendome might imitate, without impeachment to their honours. Olde Samuel when he had annointed and appointed Saule to raigne in his stead ouer all Israel, appealed to the people what iniury he had done to any, and the people iustified him in all things: now hee was easily come vnto at all times, when Saule and his fathers seruant seeking for Asles would goe to the man of God, meaning Samuell. Oh that all that are in authoritie would hearken to these examples, that with all gentlenes they might intreat the people of God committed to their gouernment, that they might freely come to them, and friendly spake with them that at the day of their deathes, they might haue the poore saintes of God praying for their deliuerance, their consciences vnburthened, their duties discharged, their subiects satisfied, iustice offered, and their soules

Luc. 8. 24

1 Sam. 12. 2. 3. 4. 5.

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everlastingly saved.

Secondly, by this we gather, that Iudges and iustices must especially looke to the godly: for Boaz saith, that all the cittie knew Ruth to be a godly woman: So that he bindeth himselfe by her religion to be as carefull for her being a stranger, as if shee were his natural daughter. For as all the cittie knew her religious, so they would all reioyce to see her aduanced. And this is the cause wherefore the Lord hath so much commended vnto vs the estate of widdowes and fatherlesse children, because for the most part they are oppressed, and not oppressors: vexed and not vexours: receyuers, and not doers of iniurie. And surely, such are simple godly men, they will beare many burthens before they complaine, & for euery trifle they wil not trouble a magistrate. Therefore euery magistrate must say with David. My eyes shall be on them that speake truth on the earth; and they that walke vprightly shall be my seruants: so haue you respect of persons, though not in iudgement, yet in common opinion: for the professors of religion are your dearest friends, who without ceasing powre forth their prayers for you, that in equitie you might draw your sword for them. Oh how lamentable is it to heare, how poore godly men are daily blasphemed and reproched for their religion: when wicked Atheistes, carnall persons, common swearers, & godles wretches, haue their hearts desire at the hands of the magistrate. Surely such persons, who desire your aide against other, deserue your swordes of iustice against themselves: for they neuer come into your presence, but to the dishonour of God. Execute iudgement therefore for them and vpon them.

Thirdly, by this we gather what it is that most commendeth women: for Boaz saith vertue, & if all the world crieth the contrary, yet Bathsheba the mother of king Salomon will confirme it: for thus shee saith, Faunour is deceitfull, beantie is but vaine; but a woman yf feareth God, shee will get praise to her selfe: for vertue and the feare of the Lord are both one thing. So that

Deu 10. 18.

Prov. 3. 3.

Psal. 101. 6

Prov. 31. 31

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that this is the thing they are most commended for, if religion will take any roote in their hearts: for beauty is worne by age, proportion of body lost by sickness, loue of men at the wagging of hand, and braue apparrell when wealth decayeth, onely the feare of the Lord endureth for euer. Wee read that Vasti the queene of Assuerus was exceeding beautifull, but shee disobeyed her husbände, and was put from her princely roomē, when godly Ester was taken in her steade. If the feare of God had beene in the former to obey her husband, Esther had not soone come into her place. But the Lorde, that hee might punish the pride of the one, and reward the religion of the other, lifted vp vertuous Esther, and cast downe that stately Vasti, to shewe vnto vs, that much better is the feare of the Lorde, then all the beautie and glory of the world.

Esh. 1. 16

Wee finde many commended in the worde of God, for their faith, but fewe for their fairenesse, that all shoulde learne more earnestly to labour, that the hid man of the heart may bee founde in incorruption of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of the Lord.

1. Pet. 3. 4.

Lastly, let vs all learne by this, as well rich as poore, gouernours as subiectes, men as women, that about all thinges we follow the example of Ruth, to please God more then our selues, to labour for vertue and religion as for treasure hid in the ground, to search for it as for golde and siluer, that wee may boldly come before the iudges of the Lorde, and pleade as subiectes, seeing the knowledge of the lawe resteth in our heartes. And let vs diligently labour for good reportes, that the magistrates may speake for vs, as Bohan doth for Ruth, to her singular comfort, that we may with boldnes stand to be iudged & not to suffer as euill doers. For a good name is better then a precious oymment, & the godly and guiltlesse are most honorable, when they are causeles accused: euen as Ioseph; the needest way for him to come to the Kings fauour, was first of al to be wrongfully imprisoned. So if wee study to lead holy conuersations, let the draw vs to the iudgment seate as offendors

Eccles. 7. 1

doers

does; yet our religion shal speake for vs, not guilty: and though all the world should vniustly condemne vs, yet the sonne of God shal sue out our pardon.

And true it is, I am thy: Wee shewed you in the beginning, that his consolation had two partes. The first, his confession in this verse: and the other his counsell in the nexte. Nowe then commeth his confession to be handled, wherein he graunteth himselfe a kinsman, and therefore bound vnto that dutie shee required of him, but yet withall hee soberly telleth her, there is one neerer then I: meaning to shewe her, that the whole care of the matter doeth not cheefely depende vpon him. Whereby wee gather, the singular conscience and humilitie of Boaz: for if the feare of God had not hindered him, hee might like scornefull persons, haue denied that he had any kindred so base: and therefore hee might haue tolde her, that shee was come to a wronge man, that shee had mistaken her marke, that shee must not looke so hie, as the choise man in Bethlechem, & some baser husband wil be seeme a Moabiteesse. But hee dooth not so, for he confesseth against himselfe that her suite was equall, and he bounde to deale in it. Where againe wee haue another worthy example for all magistrates to imitate, euen to pronounce iudgements agaynst their owne causes, and giue euidence against their owne commodity. For what a simple thing was it for Boaz to marrie with so poore a woman as Ruth, by whome he could hope for no great portion, but onely religion. Oh that this vprightnes woulde enter into the hartes of men in our dayes, when they handle their mutuall affaires, to speake the truth indifferentlie, as well against as for themselves, yea and forsake their dearest friends in vniawfull suites. But rather it reioyce them at the hearte, to see bad matters bolstered vp, and wronge iudgements through ignorance vniustly pronounced: whereas the plainifes, and defendants themselues doe cyther of them in their owne conscience knowe their cause to be naught: yet against both conscience, iustice, and equitie, will spende their money and hartes also

to be thoroughly reuenged on their christian neighbors, to ouerthrow their cause be it neuer so equall: yet this is their drift, to make the righteous lawe, the onely defendour of all their vnrighteous & vngodly dealings. How if there were no lawe nor magistrate, would these malicious persons behaue themselves, that dare to wreste the helme of iustice by corruption in these peaceable dayes, and are more fitte to bee the inhabitants of Sodome and Gomorhe, then the fellow-dwellers with the godly and faithfull? Woulde God that euery offendour were bounde to restore for euery defaulte, foure times so much, then woulde our quietnesse be greater, our suites vprighter, the truth vttered before danger, causes ended without chargeable costes, wise men should be the lawyers, the truth shoulde be the euidence, yea & equiry should giue iudgement against our selues.

Tarry this night. This is the counsell that Boaz giueth vnto Ruth, that seeing it was night, shee should tarry till the morning, and then hee will deale with her kinsman in the behalfe of his right, which if hee will doe vnto her, Bohaz cannot withstande him, but if he refuse, then will Boaz performe the duty. Whych promise hee confirmeth by an oath, as the Lord sayeth: bidding her to sleepe vntill the morning. Where wee see first of all the kindnesse of the man, that would not presently thrust a poore woman from the place of her lodging, but quietly suffered her to harbour beside him, yea and biddeth her to tarry at her rest, & to sleepe vntill the morning.

Secondly, he woulde doe nothing which might perterb the cause of her other kinsman, before hee had gotten his consent to the deliuey of his right: teaching vs thereby, that it is not lawfull to enter into the least parte of our neighbours tytles, though wee may seeme to haue as great right in it as Bohaz had in Ruth, without the free & willing agreemēt of him that hath any propertie or interest therein,

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Lastly, Bohaz confirmeth his promise with an oath, which is the last speech vnto the woman, for her assurance to depend on his credite, and the laste thing that must bee vsed in all our communications: But of these matters we haue already spoken, and therefore thus much for this time. Nowe
let vs giue prayse to
God.

The end of the ninth
Lecture.



The tenth lecture.

Chap. 3. ver. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18.

- 14 And so shee lay at his feet vntill the morning, and then shee arose when one knew not another. For Boaz said, let no man know that a woman came into the floore.
- 15 And then he said, giue me the sheete wherewithall thou art couered, and hold it vp: then he measured sixe measures of barley, and laid it vpon her: afterward he went into the cittie.
- 16 But shee came to her mother in law, which said, who art thou my daughter? and shee declared whatsoever the man had done vnto her.
- 17 And shee said also, he gaue me these sixe measures of barley, for he said, thou shalt not returne emptie to thy mother in law.
- 18 Then said shee, be of good comforte vntill thou know how the matter will fall out for the man will not rest vnlesse he end it this day.

THese words are the last part of this Chapter: wherein is shewed vnto vs how Boaz dismisseth Ruth, after they had slept till the morning: and Ruth returneth ioyfully to her mother againe.

The wordes containe two partes, generally in them: The first parte is betweene Boaz and Ruth, verse 14. 15. The second is betweene Ruth and Naomi, in the three next verses following. The first parte betweene Boaz and Ruth, is of those things which they did together in the barne. First, that Ruth laye at his feete vntill the mornynge. Secondlye, that shee arose early before daye, because Boaz would haue none to knowe that a woman came into the floore, After they

they were both risen: Boaz giueth to her six measures of barley, layeth them vpon her, and sendeth her away. Secondly, hee himselfe goeth into the Cittie, verse 15. to performe that which he had promised vnto her.

The other part betweene Ruth and Naomi, in the three next verses, containeth a declaration of those things which passed betweene them twaine after shee came from Boaz. Wherin Naomi first asketh who shee was, because comming home early before day shee could not know her by her countenance: To whom Ruth declareth all things which passed between Boaz and her, shewing vnto her the sixe measures of barley which the mā gaue vnto her for Naomies sake, verse 16. 17. Secondly, after Naomi vnderstood the proceedings of Ruth, shee comforteth her, verse 18. assuring her of the dilligence of Boaz, that hee woulde not sleepe till hee had ended the matter the very same day. Of these parts let vs briefly speake in order as the spirit of God shall giue viterance and the time permit.

And so shee lay at his feet vntill the morning. As we haue heard in the former verses, the conferce had betwesne Bohaz and Ruth, the end and conclusion whereof was this, that Ruth should content her selfe to tarry with him, and sleepe vntill the morning, So in this place, the performance thereof is noted vnto vs. For the holy Ghost vndoubtedly expressing these wordes, doth it to signifie vnto vs these two things: First that Ruth remained satisfied with the answer of Bohaz, and trobled him no more with further talke. Secondly, that he might deliuer these two innocent persons, from all suspicion of incontineny: for neither talked they any more, or turned one to another, but either of the both contented with their hard lodging, gaue themselues to quiet sleepe vntill the morning.

Where we first of all note, that the gift of continency or chastitie is not in the nature or power of mā, but is a holy fruit of true and vsayned religion, yea a special

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special worke of the spirit of God, as appeareth in both
 these godly persons: for if eyther of both had beene gi-
 uen ouer, no doubt but nature hath put them forward
 to the satisfying of their carnall lustes. But seeing, as
 Christ saith, none can haue it but them to whom it is Mat. 19. 11.
 giuen, and euery gift commeth downe from the Father Iam. 1. 17.
 of lightes. This among other, is a speciall and extraor- Gen. 39. 9
 dinarie blessing of God, vppon many persons truely re-
 ligious: not for any other cause, but that thereby they
 might more freely giue themselues to please the Lord,
 as Ioseph answered his wanton mistresse, how shall I
 doe this, seeing I feare God? The vse of this poynte is
 this, seeing wee acknowledge this benefite, to come
 from the Lord, let vs among our praiers desire y^e same, Gal. 5. 24.
 that we might crucifie the works of the old man with-
 in vs, sanctify y^e powers of our soules & bodies, be streng-
 thened to resist the temptations of sathan, and bring e-
 uery wanton desire and wauering affection into sub-
 iection of the spirit of God which ruleth and raigneth
 in the heartes of the faithfull. And aboue all thinges
 let vs earnestly labour for the feare of the Lorde, that
 wee may haue the tree as well as the fruite, the fountain
 as well as the streame, the roote from whence it
 springeth as well as the blade, & increase of the same,
 for except the streame be supplied by the spring it will
 quickly die, except the blade be nourished by the root,
 it will soone bee withered, except the fire of the holy
 ghost be increased with the coales of the knowledge of
 God, it will soone be quenched with the colde water of
 humane infirmitie, or els willingly goe out of it selfe.
 And if euer this exhortation were needefull, it is most
 necessary in these our vnclene and filthy daies wher-
 in fornications, adulteries, whooredomes, and all
 actions of incontinency did neuer more abounde, and
 the reason hereof is this, because men and women,
 haue refused the knowledge of God: and therefore
 as the Apostle saith, hee hath giuen them ouer to Rom. 1. 24
 worke filthinesse one with another. As the flesh lu-
 steth agaynst the spirit, so the spirit lusteth against
 the

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the flesh: the one is carnall and bringeth damnation: the pure knowledge of God is spiritual & worketh salvation: but if the bodies of men were made the temples of the holy Ghost, how could they conuert them to the members of harlots? But be not deceiued, for God who is true, is not mocked: you which now delight your bodies in the pleasures of vncleannes, shall lament your woes in the sorrowes of bitterness, when your soules and bodies for their wanton follies, shall eternally curse themselues, and cry vengeance vengeance to al their deserts: Yea though y^e Almighty should graunt you repentance, yet the consideration of your whoredomes will trouble your consciences, that it will be much longer before your hearts be eased, for sinnes released, for such as is the festered wound, such must be y^e searching & purging corasues: he that stole litle, hath but litle to restore, but he that stole much, must recompence much againe.

Secondly, by this we note, the diuersity of the distribution of the giftes of God, for many godly personnes are cleare from one sinne which raigneth in other, and haue some proper giftes w^{ch} are denied to other, some are subiect to one sinne and some to another. In this place Bofiaz and Ruth are declared, and commended for continent persons, but in another place Dauid and Bathshebah godly also, are overtaken with this folly: Iudah the sonne of Iacob was a good man, yet he lay with his daughter in lawe Thamar; sitting in the likeness of a whoore: Ioseph his brother also feared God, yet he refused his Lady & mistresse: And as it is in this, so it falleth out in all other, for some that haue great giftes of God his spirite, yet are too much giuen to the loue of money; others againe like Zacheus distribute the greatest part of their possessions, to satisfie their iniuries and relieue the poore: other of the faithfull like the Apostles James and Iohn, desire the superiority, and chiefeest places in the Church: but manye, like the other Apostles, enuy and disdain them for it.

And

1. Sa. 17. 4.
Gen. 38. 18.

Gen. 3. 9.

Luc. 19. 8.

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And thus the Lord which deliuereth his spirite by measure giueth to some a lesse, and to some a greater measure thereof, euen as a rich man distributeth his almes, giuing to one a good reward, and to another a small, so the Lord leaueth some to bee ouercome by their lustes, other by their money, many by their honour, some by their office, other by their pryde, & euery man hath some speciall sinne that raigeth in him aboue other: for diuers men being called to one hope and obtainyng the like precious faith in regarde of Christ, are diuersly affected and infected with sinne and this teacheth vs these doctrines: first that wee neuer condemne the persons of the sinners, but the sinfull acts they do commit: who should condemn Noah for drunkennes, Dauid for murder, Iudah for incestor, the Apostles for aspiring superioritie: surely they were godly persons and had their seuerall fautes, that the mercy of God might be magnified in their raising vp againe: for none of the godly are able to goe vpon the waters as Peter would, but they must sinke as Peter did, and yet they perishe not, but are lifted vp and saued by Christ, as Peter was: though our olde Adam cause vs to commit many sinnes, yet our newe Adam will remooue all: wee must iudge charitably of all our bretheren that are ouertaken in their seuerall sinnes: Sara lyed vnto the Lorde hymselfe, Onesimus was a theefe and a runne-away from Phylimon, Rebecca caused Iacob her sonne to beguyle his owne father, and all the holy Patriarkes had many wiues, yet none must bee so bolde as to condemne anye of those, notwithstanding their seuerall and manyfold fautes: Euen so in these our dayes, though wee see and behold our brethren, some ouercome with the world, other by promotion, many by their lustes and concupiscences other in their braue apparrell, nay if they steale and robbe, yet we must not iudge but charitably of them. I speake not this to encourage any hereunto: for if grace abounde aboue sinne, yet cursed are they that sinne, that grace and blessing might abounde vnto them: for if wee may not doe

euil where wee certainly know good may ensue thereof, much lesse may we see euil, to make the mercy of God the baude of our sinnes, but this we must remember, that there is no condemnation to the righteous, although they fall seuen times a day, but if any sinne vppon presumption of God his mercyes their damnation is iust, and are lyke a theefe that stealeth because hee seeth one among twentie pardoned by the Prince.

Secondly, there are many that condemne the whole profession, because they liue not all in the same perfection, and bring not forth the same frutes which by this doctrine we see here condemned: For as the grapes of the vine haue some lesse and some more sweetnes,

Joh. 15, 1, yet all are grapes, and grow of the vine: so the Saints of God, haue some more purytye and some lesse, and

Rom. 7, 1, yet all are nourished by Christ the Vine: what if some
12. (saith the Apostle) haue not beleueed, shall the grace of God be made of none effect, and what if some haue often fallen into sinne shall the whole Gospel for their sakes bee discredited? may the Lord hath alway some that liue so purely, such as Isaacke, Ioseph, Boaz,

Daniell, Zacharie and Elizabeth, whome all the world can neuer blemish: howsoeuer others haue their publicke faultes, first that the worke of repentance, which is a grace of God, might be practised: Secondly, y God his mercy in sauing great sinners might be magnified

2. Pet. 2, 1. Thirdly, that the faithfull (seeing their dayly falles)
1. Cor. 11, 5 might more earnestly desire their finall deliuerance, Lastly, that the wicked by this means might haue occasion, by their blasphemies to worke their owne damnation.

Afterward shee arose, for Boaz said: Now the night well passed in quiet sleepe, and the dawning of the day approaching, Ruth at the commandement of Boaz ariseth before the daylight, least any shold know she had tarried w him all that night, whereby the good old mā signifieth vn to vs that it is no new thing in the worlde what slander should be raised, for this was the thing that Boaz feared, that if any shold haue seene the wo-

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man with him, they woulde presently conceine it were for no goodnes. For the worlde museth as it yseth, and they will soonest espie a mote in the eye of a godly man: it euer was, is, and will be, that causeles surmises and reproches, shall be brought vp vpon the godly, for princes nor people can be freede there from: the which Dauid felt wel inough when he said in a certain place, that one blessednesse in God his kingdome, shall bee this, to be kept from the strife of tongues, thereby insinuating, that they must needes endure them in this life present. We knowe what our sauiour reporteth of the Pharisies, how they accused him to bee a friend of Publicanes, harlots, and sinners; and John Baptiste to haue a Deuill. Therefore this must worke patience in the faithfull, that are like affected and afflicted with yenerous tongues, for wee are not better then those fathers are, who many yeeres agoe sustayned the same reproches, and leste the burthen behinde them, to bee borne by vs, for the world is no changeling: that which then they spoke against them, now they spitte agayn st vs, and though the authours of these flanders be many yeaeres since departed, yet their manners and heires shall abide while the worlde standeth. But to come to the wordes, wherein the minde of Boaz is, that none should know that women were with him at such a suspected time: Why? will some say, is it such a matter to talkewith a woman priuately and alone, we may do it publikely, and who can say nay vnto it: I grant we may and with lesse offence, yet Boaz would giue no occasion of offence because we must abstaine from all apparance of euill: we must not onely be carefull we sinne not, but christians must bee carefull to auoyd all suspicion of sinne: it is not lawfull for Christians commonly to company and keepe with enemies, because it may be thought that they are secretly in league with them: it is not lawfull for a christian to goe into the house of a harlot, because it will discredit his name, it is not lawfull for a Christian to goe into a Temple of Idols vnless he be to deface them, because it may be thought he goeth

Psal. 31. 20

Mat. 11. 18
19

I. Thess. 5
22

to worshipping: the like may be saide of all other in the like kinde, where men are as guiltie that looke on, as they that are the principalles. And beloued I would to God that this carefulnes to auoide and shunne the outward apperaunce of iniquitie were well considered: the extraordinary charges in diet or apparel wold be eschewed, lest we bee accompted daynty and prodigall or proude: slacknesse in going to sermons wold bee amended, lest we be deemed idle and secure Atheistes: buying, selling, playing and gaming on the sabboth day, wold be punnished, lest it be thought we haue no feare or care to worship the Lord: the dayly and most lamentable swearing of rich & poore, old and young, parents and children, maisters and seruantes, husbantes & wiues, men and women, wold with terrour of the Lords iudgementes be restrayned, idlenes wold be reformed, drunkennes in euery degree wold be corrected, dalliaunce and wantonnes ashamed, cosening and deceiuing simple persons bee banished, and finally if this feareing the shaddow of sinne wold rest in the hearts of mankind, neyther should the substance therof ouercome them, the pleasures allure them, the hope deceiue them, the profite compel them, the glory prouoke them, or the end thereof condemne them. Let vs therefore beloued, neyther frequēt or approach to persons y are suspected, or places that are corrupted: we can touch no pitch but wee must be polluted, nor any vncleane thinge but we are defiled: sinne is a contagious disease, it will infecte the walles and the garments where it is committed, and what agreement is between the children of God & Beliall, touch not their meats, handle not their pleasures, & tast not their companies, for the world seeth thee & will flander, the Lord seeth thee, & will recompense: We auoid the sight of serpents as Moyes fled from his rod, why shold we not then flie from the sight of that old serpent the father of lies which by all meanes possible seeketh to deface the nāe of Christ, & the nature, of the faithfull; we come not to y picture of the deuill which is deuised by a painter, but we loath the presēce
and

and abhorre the proportion of it, why should wee not then, as much the workes of himselfe, whereby he is more slyly communicated vnto vs, then in all the pictures & images of the world? We auoid the aire where the cockatrice layeth her egges, because shee poisoneth the same: but alas, wee daily delight in the pathes of vnrighteousnes, where is greater danger to our soules, then all the poisons of the world can bring to y^e body: thus wee escape out of the snare, but wee fall into the ditch, we straine at gnats but we swallow vp camels: we play with the Lion and are afraid of the Lambe: death is at the end of our iourney, and yet we will not see it. Therefore, againe and againe beware of offences, that is take heed you bring not the glorious names of Christians to discredit, your faith to ignominy, your hope to shame, your liberty to slavery, and fil not the mouthes of the wicked, with your vnwise and intemperate walking.

Secondly, by this we note, y^e we must not onely abstaine from the appearance of euil things, but we must also beware, we make not good things euil, but Boliaz knew it was lawfull for him to talke priuately or publicly, day or night, alone or in company with any woman liuing: but hee was afraid lest any shoulde take his example, as a rule or defence for their private wantonnes, or iudge his company with Ruth to bee vtterly vnlawfull, whereby the name of a magistrate, the tytle of an Elder, and the credite of two faythfull seruantes of God might be impayred. Therefore to stop these occasions, with timely arysing, hee was carefull that the knowledge thereof shoulde come vnto none, that a lawful thing misunderstood or conceiued shold not be made vnlawfull. And truely, this teacheth vs also, in christian wisdom, to weigh all our doings by the rule of the Apostle, when he saith, all things are lawfull, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawfull, but I will not bee brought into bondage of any: where hee willeth vs not onely to see what wee maye doe without daunger to our selues, but also without danger to any other. Secondly, that in nothing

1. Co. 12.1

we preiudice our christian liberty: wherby we gather y^e euery thing must be considered wth the circumstance of time, place, & persons, a lawfull thing in time may be out of place, & being lawfull for time and place, yet it may be vnlawfull for y^e persons, this we wil make plain by y^e examples of alms & fasting w^{ch} our sauour Christ himself vsed. It is lawfull & a holy thing, to giue almes at all times, yet if it be done in a market place, or with a publike signe, as to blowe a trumpet, or tolle a bell, or such like, it is hypocrisie by the sentence of our sauour, and therefore vnlawfull: euen so to pray continually is a good thing, but if it bee done in the corners of the streetes, or in the churches while all the congregation be hearing the preacher, it is vtterly vnlawfull: the same may bee sayde of preaching and reading, eating and drinking, laughing and weeping, working & playing, buying and selling, watching and sleeping, with such like, all which are good, necessary & lawfull, yet as they excede in time, place and persons, they may be vnlawfull, and therefore not to bee done. By this let all the godly learne, to vse the meane in all theyr indifferent actions; and specially according to this present scripture of Bohaz and Ruth, I woulde to God, that this too common companying of men and women together were altogether buried and banyshed from vs, I meane such as is in this wanton manner, not onely in the married, who with theyr open and publike dalliance giue great offence to sober mindes, but also in the vnmarried, in their vnseemely meetings, daungerous conuenticles, wanton feastes, and immodest running, and dancing together, w^{ch} in many vnstayed persons, stirreth vp the fire of concupiscence, that ought rather to be quenched. Euen as Phineas stroke y^e Israelites and the Madianitish woman, together vppon one speare, so woulde God our Zimries and Cozbies had some punishment, to stay other from commytting the lyke in euery age, for it is much to be feared, that the heauye hande of God is gone out agaynst vs, by reason of our open and publique whoordoms, for euen now the children are infected with the example

Mat. 6. 1. 2.

3. 4. 5.

Num. 25. 8.

example of their elders and what hope can there be of the ages to come when those that must be the parentes of them, are thus poysoned with sinne, in the dayes of their youth: Surely as the rotten seede bringeth but a sorrowfull harvest, so corrupted and wicked children will bring forth a wofull and lamentable posteritye. Put away therefore this euill, of laying stumbling blocks before the blinde, giuing offences to the weake bretheren, breeding the sleaundler of the whole Gospel, greewing the heartes of the sober minded, drawing the curse from heauen vpon vs, and vtterly drowning our selues and all our progenie in euerlasting destruction.

And when he had sayd giue me thy sheete.) Thys is the first thing which the holy Ghost reporteth of Boaz since he awaked from sleepe, and arose from his lodging, wherein hee calleth for the sheete wherewithall Ruth was couered, (which no doubt but she brought from home with her) the which hee filleth with sixe measures of barley: the which measures as I take it, were hins, and contayned an epha, which wee haue shewed you was seuen gallons and a halfe of our english measure, for so much gathered Ruth the first day of her gleaning. Out of the which we note the duty of euery godly man, which is this, neuer to bee weary of distributing to the Church: for Boaz had often bestowed much vpon Ruth and Naomi, yet we see so often as he could conueniently, he still continueth his liberalitye. For this cause Paul willethe vs neuer to be wearie of well doing, for he which needeth our liberalitie to day, will also want our reliefe to morrow, and so ofte as a faithful brother commeth and complaineth, so often are we bounde (if we haue) to succour hys necessitie. I knowe many are willing to do good once or twice in one person, but to giue so often as Boaz dyd to Naomi, they cannot abide, yet this is our weakenes and hardnes of heart, for as wee pray euery day for our daily bread, so euery day (hauing enough) we must distribute our bread: therefore wee muste followe the counsell of Paul, not to slacke in doing of good, for in due time we shall reape if we faint not, and there-

2. Thess. 3.
13.

Gal. 6. 9. 10
fore

fore while we haue time, let vs doe good vnto all, but especially to the household of faith, for as a father doth euery day sustaine and prouide for his own household, so should we which are the stewards of the Lords possessions, giue of his owne to his poore seruants, for we shame his maiestie, if wee suffer his family to want. We reade that our Sauour came often to one house, yet was not accompted a chargeable ghest. Wee reade that all the poore in the primitiue Church, were dayly maintained at the cost of the wealthy: Our Sauour hath tolde vs that wee shall alway haue the poore among vs, to whome we may doe good, not that wee should once or twise bestowe liberallie, and euer after close vp our benenolence, but that the same poore persons that dwell among vs should dayly receyue their dayly reliefe. For how shall wee desire of God to finishe his worke of redemption begun in our soules, when wee cease to perfecte our liberalitie bestowed on the poore. And now beloued in the Lorde, if euer you did; put on compassionate heartes towards your poore brethren in this time of dearth, and thinke not sufficient to distribute once, but stretch out your hands againe and againe, to helpe the necessities of the poore saints which dayly cry vnto you, giue, giue: that your loue may increase, your compassiō augment, and your fellow feeling of the same hunger, may worke a fellow feeding on the same reliefe.

And shee came home. Now we are come to the second part of this scripture, which concerneth Naomi and Ruth. And first heere is set downe her comming home to her mother in lawe before day, to whome she declareth how the man had vsed her: what promise he made her, and what gift he sent her: where wee see the diligence of Ruth, who hasted to her mother in law to shew her the newes; and to auoide the slander which we spoke of before. And this teacheth vs a mutuall concord in the duties of our professiō, that the weaker should be warned by the elder, as Ruth was by Boaz, for we must not let any be lost through default of our negligence, but the wisest must gouerne, and the other must

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must obey, if any be weary, let the lay their heads vpon our aduise, for the credit of y^e Gospel pertaineth to al & therefore all must be carefull to maintaine the sac.

Then said she. Naomi hearing the report of this prosperous successe, & seeing the corne y^e Boaz had giuen her, comforteth her daughtre to carry the issue loaking for a ioyfull end of so happy a beginning; for she knew Boaz wold not faint in y^e cause that so much cōcerned his credit as this did; nor sleepe till he had ended his intended deuise. Whereby we first of al note, that here is a godly example for parēts to imitate, to say their childre by exhortation, to depend in all things vpon y^e leisuē of the Lord, for if they be sick, the cōfort of parēts is much worth; if in trouble, the counsell of parēts may ease them; if in laboure, the parentes aduise will much encourage them; if in danger the care of their parents may deliuer them; & if they be obstinate, who but parents can reclaime thē, for as Abraham answered /zaak his sonne when he asked him for a sacrifice, the Lord said he will provide a sacrifice, euen so parents must shew their children, the prouidence of God to maintaine them, his loue to embrace them, his care to defend them, his word to instruct them, & the merits of Christ to saue them. Secondly by this we gather a worthy example of a godly magistrate, who by his wonted and accustomed dilligence, had wonne & deserved this commendation that here Naomi giueth of him, that he would not rest till he had finisshed the matter, and followed the suite of the widdow to the end, which is a worthy example for men in authority to imitate, that for conscience they should labour as faithfully in the cause of the poore, as if they were hired by fee in the suite of the wealthie, and would God this could enter into their mindes, which like dull horses will trauaile no farther, then the spurre of money pricketh them forward? how farre are they from the vprightnes of Job, which was an eye to the blinde, feete to the lame, father to the poore, and dilligent-ly sought out the strife which he knew not: they are no rulers, that in meekenes intreat them not,

Gen. 22. 78

Iob. 29. 15
16

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in mercy forbear them not, and in iustice rewarde them not. But of this we haue spoken before. now let vs giue praise to God for that which hath beene spoken.

The eleuenth Lecture.

Chap. 4. Verse. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

- 1 And Boaz went vnto the gate and sate downe there, when behold the kinsman came by of whome Boaz had spoken, to whom he sayd, hoe such a one, come hit her and sit downe heere? who came and sate downe.
- 2 Then Boaz tooke ten men of the elders of the City, and said to them, sit downe heere, and they sate downe.
- 3 Afterward he said to the kinsman, Naomis that is come againe out of the countrey of Moab, will sell a parcel of land, which was our kinsman Elimelechs.
- 4 And I thought to aduersise thee saying, buy it before the assistantes and elders of my people if thou wilt redeeme it, redeeme it, but if thou wilt not redeeme it, tell mee, for I know there is none beside thee, so redeeme it, and I am after thee. Then he answered, I will redeeme it.
- 5 Then said Boaz, what day thou buyest the field of the band of Naomi, thou must also buy it of Ruth the Moabitisse the wife of the dead, to stirre vp the name of the dead, vpon his inheritance.
- 6 And the kinsman answered, I cannot redeeme it, least I destroy mine owne inheritance, redeeme my right to thee, for I cannot redeeme it.



Ow, by the permission of the almighty, are we come to the last Chapter and last part of this history, wherein the holy Ghost sheweth vnto vs how Boaz performeth his promise made vnto Ruth in the former Chapter, and taketh her to be his wife: the whole chapter containeth two parts, the first is the marriage of Boaz, and the second is the description o

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his kindred, as well his auncestors, as his offspring. The first part of his mariage is described in the first 25 verses of this Chapter, with all the circumstances thereof necessary to be knowne, and we will deuide it into two parts: first, must be considered that which passed betweene the other kinsman and Boaz in the first 10. verses: secondly, the manner and circumstances of the marriage vnto the end of the 15. ver. The things that passed betweene Boaz and his other kinsman, are first their conference about the matter in these first 6. verses: secondly, the alienation of the right from the other kinsman to Boaz, in the foure next verses: the conference is described by the place, that it was at the gate of the Citie verse 1. secondly by the witnesses, that it was before the elders of the City verse 2. The matter being thus prepared, Boaz propoundeth the cause of their meeting in two partes, first for the redeeming of the land at the hand of Naomi, which was the inheritance of their kinsman Elimelech, whereunto he answereth, that he will redeeme it verse 4. secondly, he propoundeth to him the marriage of Ruth, y^e the case so standeth, if he redeeme the inheritance, he must also marry with the widdow, for otherwise she would not agree, and this is the fift verse. Vnto which latter condition the kinsman answereth, that he cannot doe it, first shewing the reason of it, least he destroy his owne inheritance, secondly, yeelding him power to redeeme his right in this behalfe, verse 6. Of these parts let vs briefly speake as the spirit of God shall giue utterance, and the time permit,

Chap. 3. 1

And Boaz went vp to the gate. We haue heard in the former Chapter how Boaz after he had dispatched Ruth back againe to her mother in law, himselfe went into the City, to finish vp the matter, now in this verse wee see the place mentioned where Boaz bestowed himselfe after he was come thither, which is the gate of the Citie, where he wayted till he could see his kinsman come in or out, and seing him, called, who came vnto him, and late downe beside him. Now the gates of the Cities in those auncient dayes were the publicke

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are ignorant of the great euill which commeth by the priuate handling of offences, for therby guilty persons escape vnpunished, vniust matters are by deceit confirmed, publike peace is much abused, as if colors were discerned by blinde men, or golde without the touchstone in the light: Yet heerein are we much bound to magnify y^e Lord, who hath vouchsafed vs open courts for deciding of controuersies, punishing offellons, & maintenance of peace, some for waightier, and some for lighter contentions, for as the waxe melteth before the sunne, so the subtiltie of offendours at the examination of the magistrate.

Secondly, by this wee note, that wee must in iudgement haue regard both to the stranger and to the free borne, to the poore and to the rich, to the widdow and to the married, & finally both alike to women & men, for thus the Lord commaundeth, Peruert not the right of the stranger and infant, neither take the garment of a widdow to pledge. For we must remember that Abraham, Izaac and Iacob, the fathers of the faithfull, were all their liues strangers in other lands, and therefore wee which either would or should bee their children, by doing injury to harbourles strangers, doe reuile and oppresse our spirituall fathers, when wee loue not their persons, maintaine not their right, receiue not their suites, and heare not their supplications, though they were against our owne selues, if we iustly deserue them; but of this matter wee haue spoken in the first & second chapters. Thirdly by this we learne, that publike Iudges, Iustices and iudgements, should be defended by publike authoritie; for as these Iudges sate in the gate where the munitions were, that if any should refuse them, they had power and strength to compell them: euen so if men of wisdom have not authority, who seeth not y^e euery disordred person doth contemne them. But if they haue authority and do not shew it in punishing offenders without feare or fauor of mē, they are like to Saul whē God had commanded him to kil the Amalekites, & spare neither man, womā, childe or beaſt aliue, yet contrary to this cōmandemēt, he

I, Sam. 15.
33.

he saved king Agag, but the Lord refused him, and cast him out of fauour, and Agag was hewen in peeces by the prophet Samuell: euen so it is to be feared, that there be a great many Saules in euery place, whose affections stand for law, sparing their friends for fauour, and great men for feare, who are likewise reprobated of the Lord, and rebuked by his ministers. And heere we haue good occasion to be thankfull to the Lorde, which hath given our Magistrates this power, that all things are done in the name of the Prince, and assisted by the countrey, for the punishment of offendours: and I pray God increase more obedience to their authoritie in others, and more courage in themselves, to strike assunder with the sworde of iustice, the indissoluble knots of iniurious and contentious persons, and to giue the offendours their deserved reward. Then here wee haue Boaz sitting in the iudgement place, as one that was not ashamed of his lawfull cause, & the Lord which guideth all thinges, and would now regard the religion of Ruth, bringeth the other kinsman to the sight of Boaz, who calleth him, and he commeth at the request of Boaz, and there tarrieth and sitteth downe; where we will leaue him, and goe to the second part, which is the witnesse of this conference.

Then Boaz tooke ten men. The witnesses of the actions which are to passe in this place, wee heare in these wordes to be ten men of the elders of the Cittie: there are onely tenne in my iudgement, because euery City of the Israelites had twelue gouernors, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, to whome appertained the ordering of all ciuill causes among them, for they mingled not with religion: nowe it is very likely that Bohaz and this other kinsman, beeing men of so great kindred and wealth, were two of the number of the elders, who being the parties in suite, had the residue of their fellowes to be witnesses of the actions that passed betweene them. And this interpretation is confirmed, by the diligent examination of the place, for it is said that Boaz tooke them, as if he were equall or greater in authoritie then they, and the other being a
man

man of great wealth as appeareth by this that he was willing to redeeme the inheritance of Naomi, which could be no small charge considering the late troublesome daies, and after we shall heare in the 6. verse that hee woulde not take Ruth for feare his owne name should be put out in Israel, whereby appeareth his calling not to be meane, beside his linage which was to the greatest house in Iudah, by the which it must needes follow that hee was an elder or ruler among them, which being plaine both by this and other places of Scripture, that the ciuill gouernment of the people was exercised by elders, and that the elders themselues could do nothing without the consent of their fellowes. We see here noted vnto vs this excellent doctrine, namely, that men in authoritie and gouernment must exercise nothing without the due execution of their owne law and decrees: we see here this Boaz a man of great authoritie, and lead by the spirit of God, hauing a cause for himselfe, would not desire or go about to accomplish it, but in the iudgement seat and presence of the elders, so that no fauour of persons may breake the course of iustice, whereby a common wealth is ruled. Some thinke it a base thing that great men shall stand to bee iudged in the place of common persons: And I thinke it as great a fault that common persons should haue any accessse to Magistrates to be iudged by them, for as it debaseth their estate to be ioyned with these in iudgement, so it troubleth their quietnes to be iudges ouer the. But some, & they of the greater sort, which haue the law in their owne handes, deale with it as Iudah did, when it was told him that his daughter Thamar was with childe, then there was nothing but fire and fagot to punish her for her whoredome, till she shewed him that hee was the man by whome it came, as Nathan did with Dauid, but then the heate of the fire was well cooled, when himselfe was found to be the greatest offender: euen so many deale against the weaker and poorer sort, the lawes are executed to the vttermost, but the rich and wealthy which offer all the iniurie, gather all

the friendship, which is not onely a fault to other, but in their owne consciences, for how can they iudge another, when the same offence condemneth themselves? and therefore as there was one generall place of iudgement, so there was but one common manner of triall: like as God iudgeth the rich and poore, so a good Magistrate shoulde equally receyue both, and bee as willing to be iudged themselves, as to giue sentence vpon other.

Secondly, by this example of Boaz and the elders of Bethlem we obserue that in our publike busines, wee must resort especially to the Magistrates euen in those thinges that require nothing but recorde and witness-bearing. This Boaz might haue gotten some of his priuate friends, before whom he might haue effected the matter, but wee see him heere the solicitour of his owne cause, and craueth no friendship, but the witness of the elders, by the which this doctrine is confirmed: and therefore our Sauour hauing cleansed a leper, biddeth him go shew himselfe to the Priests for a witness vnto them, and for this cause it was commanded in the law, that the waightie matters should be brought before the Priests, for Magistrates must heare as well the conclusion of peace, as the contentions of disquietnes betweene man and man. Wherein wee are bounde to render most humble and earnest thanks to almighty God, who hath vouchsafed vs this blessing, that the contractes of matrimonie, the conueyance of possessions, the redeeming of morgaged lands, the records of inheritances, and the purchase of euery lawfull thing remayneth written in the seuerall courts and offices of credite, that they might be euilasting testimonies for the posterities succeeding.

Afterward Boaz, [said] Boaz like a wise man concealeth his mind from the elders and kinsman, till they were all quietly set together, & then he beginneth with one part of his sute, telling the kinsman of the land of Elimelech which was to bee redeemed by his neere kinsman, the which Bohaz propoundeth but very obscurely, that thereby he might throughly trie his mind
and

Mat. 3. 3. 4.

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and good will toward Naomi, and making it knowne in the presence of the elders, he might by no meanes recal his word. And this teacheth vs not only innocent vprightnes, but also godly pollicy, that we be carefull for the speaking in iudgement, so much as may further our iust and lawfull cause, and not hinder it. For thus dealeth Boaz, he did not at the first shew the drift and secret of his minde, which was the marriage of Ruth, whereof as yet he speaketh nothing, but beginning the matter with the redemption of the lands, coloureth the mariage by the restoring of the inheritance, for by this meanes, he openeth the secrets of his kinsmans heart, that he bore some good will to the cause of Naomi, but of this matter inough.

Wherefore I determined] In the former verse and in this Bohaz propoundeth the matter to his kinsman, testifying thereby that of duety and conscience he did it in the behalfe of the widdow, and requireth him for his duety and conscience, to performe the parte of a kinsman, which is eyther to redeeme the right, or to render it vp, shewing that beside them twoe, there is not one that was bounde vnto it: and also promising that if he refused, then he himselfe would discharge that duety. Where wee see first of all a holy example teaching vs to deale with our neighbours, for our selues, or for other, euen as Bohaz did in this place: for hee might haue charged his kinsman that hee had no loue or care to Naomi, that he had omitted his duety in not redeeming the inheritance before this day; that his couerousnes was so great, that hee had forgot the very lawe of God: and finally, he might haue called vpon the Magistrates for some punishment to bee inflicted on him for his disobedience to the lawe of God, and neglect of his duety toward Naomi. But hee doeth none of these, but soberly in the presence of the elders, hee turneth his gentle speech to the party, and hauing propounded the matter, requireth a present aunswere. Whereby wee are admonished, that with the like charity wee handle our neighbours, if wee haue them at

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Mat. 5. 5. any aduantage, for this is that meekenes that causeth to
 29. inherit the earth, for thereby we follow Christ, with
 1. Cor. 13. 5. whom we shal find rest for our soules, for loue dealeth
 Ephes. 4. 2. not churlishly, it seeketh not his owne, it is not bitter,
 it thinketh no euill. Therefore as Paule intreated the
 Ephesians, so must I intreat you, that wee so walke as
 is worthy our vocation vnto the which we are called, in
 all modestie, meekenes, and gentlenes of mind, bea-
 ring with one another through charity. Oh how vn-
 godly are these clamorous accusations amongst vs, for
 which many lie in waite, that they might haue any
 cause to draw their brethren, as it were starke naked
 into the presence of the magistrates, that is with most
 impudent and shamelesse vntruthes, to charge and
 examine them vpon their owne suspicions, neuer thin-
 king on the iniuries they offer vnto them, or looking
 for the same measure againe at the handes of other.
 Some there are also which for euery trifling farthing,
 will call their neighbors before the Magistrate, deligh-
 ting in their own iniuries, the troubles of their friends,
 the disquietnes of the Magistrates, and the abuse of
 the law: whose impatient constitution calleth for ven-
 geance at the hands of the Lorde, and the curse of the
 land is gone out against them, nothing is wanting, but
 that the braunches of their vnquiet spirites, should be
 pruned by the sword of iustice, by them to whom they
 make their complaints.

Secondly, by this example of Boaz we gather, that
 the onely cause of bringing suites before the elders and
 magistrates, was the peace and quietnes of the people,
 not for the kindling, but the quenching of contention
 before it arose, that the dayly brauling, rayling, chi-
 ding, and quarelling, might bee preuented by the
 wisdom of the Magistrates; for as the Philistines
 tooke away all the armour from the Israelites to keep
 them from rebellion, so Magistrates hearing of causes
 with seueritie and iustice, shoulde take away the in-
 struments of oppressions, and the weapons of con-
 tentious persons from the common wealth. Thirdely,
 by this also we gather the diuersitie of proceeding in
 iudiciall

iudiciall causes in these daies and in times past. Then men in their owne persons did pleade in iudgement their owne causes, but now others make gaine of it, then suites were not so tedious, as now they are, then men sought not out such flyding shiftes to couer their falsehoode, but they did as Boaz and his kinseman doeth, the one simply propounded his grieve, and the other gently answered his question, for so should euery one vtter the truth indifferently, both to their benefite and damage: then the worlde was not troubled with writs, fees or counsellours, but euery man brought his cause and his witnes, so the iniury was quickly confessed, easily tried, and speedily remedied, finally, wee re-
 trayne almost nothing of the auncient manners in this point, but onely the bare and outward names. By the which wee are admonished of humane misery, for as the world groweth, the troubles thereof are increased: in the first age they had no warres: in the seconde age they had no certaine dwellings, in the third age they had no chargeable suites, in the fourth age they had no quietnes, and euer since wars haue multiplyed bloud, one countrey carryed to another, mens lawfull inheritances are taken by violence, the Church is spoyled of her libertie, the world of her peace, our bodies of their health, our goods of their continuance, our names of their credite, our corne of increase, our landes of their fruites, and all our liues of their naturall benefites. Our Sauour shewed vs, that before the ende, the loue of many should waxe cold, but surely it is not onely cold, but frozen in our lamentable age: the Apostle hath shewed vs, that men should be louers of themselues, and louers of pleasures more then God, when shall these daies be if they bee not now? may wee not see that euery man raketh for his profite, as the Eagle raueneth for her pray, if they may get house or lande, leases or farmes, goods or cattelles, money or meate, apparell or ease, they care not though all other lie harborles in the fields, naked in the streetes, and pining in their weary and dayly labours. Doeth not now the Gentleman make more accompt of his worship,

then the worship of God, the Merchant of his profite, then of Iesus Christ, the husbandman of his fruites, then of the feare of the Lorde; the labourer of his wages, then the wealth of his soule, the begger of his almes, then of vnfayned deuotion, & euery craftsman of his trade, more then of true religion: when shall the day of vengeance come? for the Church of God trauaileth with child of these miseries, and euery day is a thousand til she be deliuered, surely the day cannot be long before the finall remedy appeare.

But Boaz, sayd] After he had entred with the land, and the other had graunted to redeeme it, hee proceedeth also to the second part of his speech, telling him, if hee redeeme it, hee must redeeme it at the hande of Ruth the Moabitesse, the wife of the dead, with whom he must tarrie, to raise vp the name of the deade vpon his inheritance. This law for a man to marrie with the
Deut. 25. 5. 6. widow of his deceased brother as it is commaunded by the Lord, so it had a speciall regard to many things, first, for the continuance of the first borne in euery family, who were the Lordes by the lawe, signifying thereby that Christ the first borne of the Almighty, should remaine with all his Church, like the first borne of this world, and be the heyres of grace for euer and euer. And as he would not suffer any family to want a first borne, because it was the Lords, so not one of the faithfull can bee lost, because they are the Lordes, Secondly because it was an image of the resurrection, for as a man being dead without issue; his brother taketh his wife, begetteth a sonne which shall bee called the sonne of the deceased, and he which is deade shall liue in him, in as much as his name is reuiued: euen so the bodie laid dead in the graue, shall be reuiued at the last day by the powerful working of the Almighty, for as the first is wonderfull, so the seconde is admirable. Thirdely, by this lawe of subrogation, is signified the great care which the Lorde had for the temporall augmenting of euery family among the Israelites, and in that, the loue of God in Christ to his Church, that though wee die without fruite in barrenesse, yet the
 Lord

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Lord will giue vs a name, whereby after a fewē daies we shall liue with him for euer.

But in these words we first of all note, when he saith that he must buy it at the hande of Ruth the Moabiteesse, the wife of the decessed; that one cause both of the redemption of lands, and marriage of the brother or next heyre to the widdow, was for the womans or widdowes sake, namely, that she shoulde not bee left destitute: for wee reade in the Gospell of Luke, that barrenesse was a great reproch among women in those dayes, now wee knowe that this law was onely for barren widdowes, and not for them that were fruitfull, and who would marry with such a woman, whome in his owne heart he feared would be fruitlesse: therefore the Lorde to succour these poore desolate widdowes gaue this for a lawe, that the brother or neereft kinsman to the husbands decessed, should take them to be their wiues: where hee againe commendeth vnto vs the carefull estate of destitute widdowes, if they be oppressed, wee must ease them, if reiected, we must receyue them, if forsaken wee must comfort them: if reproched, wee must acquite them, and finally if they will marry, they may, yea their owne friendes, or the Church must prouide them husbands. And seeing the Lord would thus decree by a lawe, the safegard of those that were despised, much more would hee defende by iudgement the cause of poore fruitfull widdowes, the mothers of many children. Now although wee are not bounde to this lawe of marriage, yet wee are tyed to doe good to the widdowes, for the nature of the lawe being long since abrogated, yet the vse thereof remayneth for euer and euer. For maintaynance by the word of God must be allowed them wherewithall they may liue, their husbandes beeing dead: Therefore Bohaz telleth his kinsman, that hee must redeeme the inheritaunce at the handes of Ruth the Moabiteesse, because by her marriage, it is made the widdowes, the husbande dying without issue, like as in this place wee observe that all the inheritance descendeth to the wid-

Luc. 1:2, 5.

dow, and therefore she bestowed her selfe vpon the next of the kindred, who indeed with vs is the heire to all. Therefore by this we must all learne, but especially the married, or those that intend it hereafter, that it is one especial duty of a careful husband, to provide before hand for the maintenance of their wiues, that if death neuer so suddain take them away, yet they may not leaue them as many haue done, harbourles without house, comfortles without friends, and wealthles without conuenient maintenance. By this we see, the cōmendable assurance of iointures & dowers in lands or mony, which many parents do wisely take for their daughters, to be a thing allowable by the word of God: yet many offende in the excesse, that they will neuer match where they can haue none, though there be neuer so great hope in time to come, so that wealth and nothing els is the end of most marriages. Then by this we see condēned first al those which hauing sufficient, will hardly leaue to their wiues any thing, beside that which they cannot keep from them, & hence it is, that many leaue to their children hundreds & thousands, but scant twenties or forties to their helples widowes. Other hauing many children, leaue the greatest part of their wealth to their widowes, through whose youthfull marriages, many times, their whole posterity is brought to pouerty. But a third sort there are which mind nothing saue only mariage and to borrow a litle for their festiuall day, but afterward let the world sink or swimme, children without breade, wiues without comfort, themselues as bare as the Grasshopper in winter, & their whole families most pitifully tormented, they repent, though al too late, the children wish they had neuer bin borne, the parents curse the day of their first acquaintance, the family complaine of pouerty, the cuntry of charges, the people of necessity but they poore silly soules, the innocent infants are left to the merciles world, to liue in beggerie. Oh that this godly forecast wold enter into the minds of many headlong parents, that their liues might bee more blessed, their children more happie, their families more contented, the

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the country better furnished, and the poore better succoured, that there might bee no complayning in our streetes, no leading into captiuitie, and not one feeble person among vs, that our sonnes may be as the fruitfull garners, and our daughters like the polished corners of the temple: Oh blessed are the people that be in such a case, yea blessed are the people whose God is the Lorde. Then should the name of God be honoured by our liues, and praised in our deathes, when our widdowes are prouided for, our children maintayned, our families nourished, and our soules shalbe blessed.

Then the kinseman said. This second question of marriage being propounded, the kinseman in these words answereth, that he cannot redeem the inheritance vpon that condition, & giueth a reason thereof, because then to saue an others, hee should destroy his owne, meaning if he had but one child by Ruth, that should bee for Machlon her diseased husbände, and so his owne name should be forgotten in his inheritance. Whereby wee see that hee opposeth the feare of the losse of his owne name, against the seuerer commandement of God, and doubteth that if he followe the law of God and custome of the faithfull, his land may lacke an heyre, his house a maister, and himselfe a sonne. The like vnto this was that of Onan the second sonne of Iudah, when he should haue taken the wife of his deceased brother, would not performe his duty toward her, but abusing in filthines his owne body, because he would not benefite his brother, was therefore iustly slaine by the Lord. And I feare that a great many are sick of this disease, that loue y world about the worde, their land about the lawe of God, their children more then charity requireth, who thinke they are borne for nobody but onely for themselves: but especially in mariage, they had rather haue the land then the man, the portion then the woman, like this man which was willing to take the inheritance but vnwilling to marry the widdow, for this cause they oppresse both children & widdows, they preferre

Gen. 38.

show

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their priuate gaine, before publike godlinesse, who for their posteritie some are occupied in bribery, some in vsury, some in extortion, and many in vnlawfull bargaining, whose only and chiefe care is for nothing, but that they may die rich: but better is poore Lazarus at his death, then all the rich gluttons in the worlde: for wealth maketh not to die well, but rather choketh the soule with insatiable care, onely religion is the surest badge of a godly man, whose riches is pouertie, whose pleasure paine, and whose regarde is saluation. But this man is wel contented to giue ouer his right to Bohaz wherein surely he doth him a pleasure, but if there had beene any profite in it, he would first haue serued himselfe: wherein wee haue a worthy example of a worldly minde, which graunteth all things till it touch his discomodity: for thus the world wil heare vs preach till we rebuke their couetousnesse, or craue their beneuolence, for euery one will goe as farre dry soote as they can, but none wil be wet for the law of y Lord: that is, so long as we tell them of their faithes, exhort them to repentaunce, perswade them from pleasure, and drunkennesse, but once touch their purses, as Iohn

Baptist did Herodes whoredome, then farewell

preaching, faith and repentance: But thus

much shal suffice for this time.

Now let vs giue praise
to God.

The end of the eleuenth
Lecture.



The twelfth Lecture.

Chap. 4. ver. 7. 8. 9. 10.

7 Now this was the manner before time in Israel, concerning the redeeming and chaunging for to stablish all things, a man did plucke off his shooe, and gaue it his neighbour, and this was a sure witnesse in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinseman said to Boaz, buy it for thee & he drew off his shooe.

9 And Bohaz, saide vnto the elders, & vnto the people, ye are witnesse this day, that I haue bought all that was Elimelechs, and all that was Chilion and Mahlons, of the hand of Naomi.

10 And moreover, Ruth the Moabite the wife of Mahlon haue I bought to bee my wife, to stirre vp the name of the dead, vpon his inheritance, and that the name of the dead bee not put out from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place ye are witnesse this day.



These wordes containe the finishing vp of the matter betweene Bohaz & his kinseman: howe the one resigneth his right to the other, and the knitting vp of the marriage. They consist of two parts: first, a description of the auncient manner of alienation, or chaunging of titles, rightes, and properties: in the seuenth verse, in these wordes: *Now this was the manner afore time &c.* to the ende of the verse: The seconde is the manner how this man doth giue ouer, and resigne his right to Boaz, in the eyght, ninth and tenth verses: and containeth two parts; the first respecteth the kinsman in the ninth verse: where first hee biddeth Bohaz to buy or redeeme it; Secondly, hee draweth off his shooe,

The second part respecteth Boaz, and sheweth how he receiueith it in the 2. next verses: wherein first he calleth witnesse of the elders & people, vers. 10. Secondly, he accepteth the proffer, or purchase which is double: first the lande or inheritance. vers. 10. Secondly, the widdow or wife of Machlon, vers. 11. Of these let vs briefly speake in order as they lie, with the assistance of God his spirit, and the permission of the time.

Now this was] First of all here is described the manner of God his people, how in ancient time, they were wont to allienate, or put of their right from one to another, which the holy Ghost setteth down for the better vnderstanding of that which followeth. And this manner of changing or selling was commanded by the Lord himselfe, as we read in these wordes. Then the
Deut. 25. elders of this cittie shall call him and commune with
8.9,10. him, if he stand and say, I will not take her: Then shall his kinswoman come vnto him, in the presence of the Elders, and loose his shooe from his foote, and spit in his face, and answere and say, so shall it be done to him, that will not build vp his brothers house. And his name shall bee called in Israel, the house of him whose shooe is put off. In the which wordes we note these things: First that it was the dutie of the woman to complaine of such a man before the Magistrates, as we may see in the 7. ver. Secondly that the Magistrates were bounde to call and examine such persons, of the causes of their deniall. Thirdely, that the woman should pul off the shooe and also spit in his face, which the Lord did doubtles commande for the poore comfortles womans sake, that no excuse shoulde bee admitted of delay, but that they might eyther be presently receiued, or presently refused: for she which was not fit to day, would not be to morrow, where we gather the great care of the Lord for widdowes, which hath warned their friends to prouide for them marriages, & armed the magistrates to defend their weakaes, truly as they which are least accompted in the worlde, are most esteemed of y^e Lord, euen so they which are most regarded of the world, are least respected of the Lord:

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for in this law, the almighty had an especial eye to the poore, for he knewe the wealthy could want no husbandes: Whereby wee are taught first, to magnifie the goodnes of the Lorde: which as Mary saith, looketh vpon the poore degree of his seruantes: and beholdeth the rich a farre off, his delight is in aduancing of them that are cast downe, and all his lawes defend the causes of the oppressed. Secondly, that we make no light account or reckoning of those whom the Lord in his word doth so highly commende vnto vs: for it is an especiall token of them that shal bee saued, that they make much of them that feare the Lorde: what though they be as poore as Lazarus, and neuer so contemptible in the eyes of the world: yet it is a thousand times more commendable to be frendly to such, then to al y rich gluttons of y world, but of this point we haue spoken before, and it is sufficient to touch it now.

Luc. 1. 43

Psal. 115. 4.
Luc. 16. 29

Secondly, by this wee also note, that if there be any iniury done to the children by the parentes, or to widdowes, by their friendes in their marriages, it is lawfull for them to appeale to the Magistrates: As for example, if the parentes woulde force their children, eyther not to marry at all, or else to marrie against their myndes, rather then they yeeld to eyther of both, they may and ought to sue to the Magistrate: The which as it was lawfull for the Iewes by this lawe here mentioned, euen so it is left to vs to immitate, although the ceremoniall vse of it be ceased, which consisted onely in the brothers marriage, and as long as Magistrates are, so long the true vse of it remayneth, as it doeth in many others. Yet although the Gospel speake not of it, because it is a thing so farre against nature, yet it commaundeth that they which doe euill shoulde feare the sworde of the Magistrate, because hee beareth it not in vaine: and moreouer it is flatly agaynst the Gospell, that any shoulde doe vnto other, which they woulde not haue done to themselues: much more this forcible dealing with frendes or children: And if it bee lawfull for the wife or husband to flee to the Magistrate in priuate iniuries, much more for the children which are weaker

Rom. 13. 1.

4.
Mat. 7. 12.

weaker, and therefore neede more helpe. This I speake not to stirre vp the mindes of any against their parents, but with the Apostle I exhort and command that euery one obey their parents in all thinges lawfull: for he is accursed that doth otherwise; but to this ende I vtter it, that wee may knowe what is lawfull & what is vnlawfull: for the same God which hath commanded that parents should bring their vnruly sonnes and daughters for to bee punished, willeth also that they w^{ch} do any hurt to their children, either in soule to draw the from y^e Lord: or in body, as in vnlawful or vngodly mariages, in vnlawfull & vngodly actions, their onely refuge should be to y^e minister of God, y^e lawful magistrate, to whom they owe more obedience then to their owne parents: Therefore Paul willeth parents, that they prouoke not their children to wrath, which is by their tirannous commandements to bind their consciences, and their cruell authoritie to murder their minds: For if a priuate subiect may sue against the prince, & craue the law, much more a sonne or a daughter, being grieued by their parentes: The vse of this doctrine is to teach and instruct vs, first what duety wee owe to the magistrates, who haue greater care and charge ouer vs for the peace of our countrey, and publike welfare, then parentes for our maintaynance, and priuate obedience: therefore Paule willeth to pray and giue thanks for the magistrates, that vnder them we may liue godly

1. Tim. 2. 2. and quiet liues, for that is good and acceptable in the
 3. sight of God our Sauour, whereby wee may iustly complaine of the slacknesse of our vnhappy age, wherein men murmur and grudge at any charge which ariseth for our Prince, but especially that there are so few which in all their liues haue prayed for Prince or Magistrates, and if they haue, it was but a wishe and no more, that they might liue in peace to gather wealth, not in godlines, for the profite of their soules: Againe by this all parentes must bee instructed howe to deale with their children, that they raygne not like Gods o^uer the fruites of their bodies, but intreate them in meekenesse, being of yeares of discretion, like their fellow

fellow heires of God his kingdome : euen as they will aunswere to the Almightye, who gaue them such issue, and to the lawes of our Prince, that requireth accompt of them, for the chiefeſt ſtrokelyeth not in them, but in thoſe that gouerne both church & common wealth, and wee haue already ſhewed that in ſome cauſes, it is a glory for their children, to decline from their counſelles: Laſtly, all children muſt herein alſo be ſchooled, that with all reuerence they ſubmit themſelues to the aduice of their parentes : but eſpecially like free men in Chriſt; they liſten alway what the word of God ſaith: for that muſt bee their iudge, and parentes alſo, when it ſhall not go for payment, that they did it for feare of their friendes : but they which feare them more then God, ſhall with them bee excluded for euer from God : and let yſeuermore giue thanks to the Almightye, which thus provideth for our miſerie, to defende our innocencie, that if wee bee in one place oppreſſed, we may be redreſſed in another, appointing courts of appeale from our owne parents to his owne magiſtrates.

Thirdely, by this alſo we obſerue and note, when hee ſaith that this was a ſure witneſſe in Iſrael, that it is a thing required in our religion, that of our publike affaires there may bee publike teſtimonies, as for example, our purchaſing, buying or ſelling, ought by religion and the feare of God, to bee done with open and publike witneſſe, for the better aſſuraunce to buyers and ſellers, to auoide deceyte in the one, and couetouſneſſe in the other; and therefore it was ſaide in the lawe, that vnder the witneſſe of twoe or thre ſhall euery worde ſtande. And further alſo, there muſt bee ſome outwarde ſigne, to ſeale vp the matter, in this place here is the putting of the ſhooe, which ſignifieth poſſeſſion and diſpoſſeſſing againe, the rendering of a mans right to him that hath it. Therefore in ſome places there is vſed ſtriking of handes as the ſhutting and making vp of bargaines and covenantes, and who knoweth not that in the purchaſe of Lande, there is ſeiſin and deliuey by a pectee of

of earth and a twigge, of houses all goe forth and the buier entreth in alone and ther cabideth, and this I may say is a sure testimonie in England. But you would know why the Lorde beside the recorde of the magistrates, required such outward and open signes: To which I answered, he did it for this cause, that the simplest among them might not be deceyued, but might haue y^e as the euidence of his possession for euermore: witnes faileth, magistrates die, people are vnconstant, yea, and some wil falsely sweare and witnesse to any vntruth, yet the shoor remained an euerlasting testimonie. Therefore among vs there is writing and scale, by the which things are confirmed, which passed many ages ago, and this was taken from the ancient vsage, wherein mens names were entred in brasse and stone, and the quantity of their possessions described. Therefore doth the holy Ghost so precisely set down the purchase which Abraham made with Ephron: where the

Gen. 23. 17.

fielde is named, the borders or boundes of it is described; the caue is mentioned, and the very trees that grew in the same, are made sure vnto him, the like may bee said of the stones in mount Gilead, that Iacob reared as a witnesse betweene him and Laban, and many other which serue to this ende, that as Paule saith, We should not defraude one another: For if he were accursed that remoued the land marke of his neighbour, what shall they bee which get markes and lands both, some by deceyuing, some by forged euidence, other by false witnes, and some force their neighbours, wil they, nil they, to depart from their dwellings and possessions, and to leaue them for little or nothing in the clawes of these cormorants, their great possessions require great accompts, and I feare me, when that day shall come, they will be as ready to restore, as euer Iudas was, but it shal be too late and without fruite, for the sentence is already pronounced, that fire shal consume their dwellings, and their children or posterity shall bee vagabounds, but the righteous shal haue the land in possession,

Gen. 31. 52

1. Thes 4. 6

Therefore the kinsman] This verse sheweth howe
the

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the right was resigned, first the kinsman gineth Boaz authority, when he biddeth him buy it for himselfe: and secondly he renounceth his owne, when hee pulleth off his shooe. Where first of all it may bee demaunded; why doeth hee plucke off his owne shooe? seeing by the lawe the woman shoulde doe it. and also spitte in his face; as we haue heard already, Vnto which I briefly aunswere: First the law before said, wherein the woman was bound to plucke off the shooe, and to spit in her kinsmans face, was for such as vtterly denied both to redeeme the inheritance and to marrie the widdow, as also that would not prouide any substitute to doe it in their behalfe: but this kinsman of Naomies, got Bohaz to redeeme his right, as we may see in the 6. verse of this chapter, in these words redeeme my right to thee: Therefore that ceremony was needles: Secondly I aunswere, that the woman by that law was bounde to complaine to the magistrates: but neyther Naomi nor Ruth did make any complaint, saue only a priuate petition vnto Boaz for to marry her in his owne behalfe; and therefore the matter being confessed before the complaint, as he was willing to release his title vnto Boaz, who was ready to receiue it, so wth lesse rigour the law was executed vpon him: for a penitent offendor is worthy of most fauor, Thirdly neither Naomi nor Ruth were present whē this matter was in hearing, because they were vncertaine of their kinsmans minde, who if he had granted, it had beene immodesty for thē, seeing they neuer asked him before, and if hee deayed as he did, by their presence they should seeme to distrust the promise which Boaz made to Ruth: But seeing the consent of Naomi & Ruth was veeled to Bohaz, and that being but the first mention, they needed not bee present, and the matter at the first confessed, was at the beginning dispatched: Out of the which wee first obserue, that it is a pointe of godlinesse, and worthy of friendship, that in our suites wee shoulde at the first confesse our oppressions: if wee haue done any; I knowe many will commit their vnjust dealing to the

Mat. 5.25

triall of the lawe, looking for a doubtfull issue of the same: & will say, if I bee condemned, the charge is but the more to my selfe, but I reply & say, why dost thou not confesse thy folly, and the iniury which thou hast done, & saue the charges which thou spendest in the triall thou doest but ad murther to thy malice, drunkenness to thy thirst, and prodigality to thy couetousness: Thou hast already robbed thy neighbour, by thy oppression, now thou wilt spoyle the Lorde of those his goodes whereof hee hath made thee steward, by consuming the in law to defende thy iniuries. Follow the counsell of the Lorde, agree with thy aduersary quickly, whilest thou art in the way with him, lest hee complaine of thee to the iudge, and the iudge deliuer thee to the Tylor, and so forth: Let wise men end your matters at home, abide not the verdit of the law, it is too costly: for as you are accomptable to your neighbor for the vttermost farthing, so you shal be answerable to y^e Lord for euery mite, you haue mispent, when the very money you haue laide out shall rise in iudgement against you to condemne your contentions.

Secondly, we note here in Naomi and Ruth: an excellent example of a godly mind: for if Naomi would she might haue dealt with her kinsman, and he denying, shee might haue done him all the disgrace set down in the law, to haue pulled off his shooe, to haue spit in his face, to haue defamed him and his house for euer: but she dealeth not so, she woulde not reuenge one iniury by another, she maketh the matter sure beforehand, that if he refused, Ruth might be married, and the other not disgraced: So deare is the name and credit of ones neighbour to a godly person, that they will aduenture their owne losse and hinderaunce, to saue the honesty of other. Therefore saith Peter, it is the glory of a man to passe by the infirmities of his brother, Ioseph might haue disclosed the lustes of his mistresse, and saued his owne imprisonment: but hee concealed it which wrought first his misery, and then his felicitie. But oh howe fewe are there like Ioseph in our daies, which hauing their brethren at aduantages

Gen, 39.17
18.

auantages, will not to their vttermoſt accuſe them. We haue many Zibaes which accuſe poore Mephiboſeth to Dauid, with gifts & with bribes, pretending ſimplicity, with words ſweeter then hony: when war is in their hearts, their lips haue learned their flattering ſtyle, they are of their father that olde accuſer of God his children, but as he is caſt downe, ſo they ſhall bee condemned. yea euen then when it is no benefite to them, how doth it reioyce them to ſee their neighbours imprifoned, their enemies ſlandered, their poſſeſſions remoued, their wealth diminiſhed, their credite abated, and they deſtroyed of friendes and fauour at one time.

Rev. 12. 10.
Job. 1. 10.

Is this the thing that you woulde haue them doe to you? might not the Lorde haue ſuffered him to ſtand, and caſt downe you that he might haue laughed at your deſtruction. Conſider your ſelues beloved in the Lorde, and let vs bee theſchollers of this godly Naomi, if wee may get our owne with faire ſpeeches, let vs not vſe theſe threatning wordes: If wee muſt hide the truth for the benefite of our neighbours, much leſſe muſt wee conceale falſhood, that not one worde of diſgrace bee vttered to the diſcredit of our neighbours. Oh that thoſe which contend with their neighbours woulde bee inſtructed in this doctrine; howe much woulde it moderate their malice for the benefite of their aduerſaries, and bring peace vnto both, neuer to bee repented of? Wherefore lay aſide all maliciousneſſe and guile, diſſimulation, enuy, and all euill ſpeaking, as innocent and new borne babes: and let vs deſire the ſincere milke of the word of God, that we may grow to bee perfect men in Ieſus Chriſt, that as hee ſuffered and gaue no aunſwere, being led as a ſheepe before the ſhearer, which openeth not his mouth: hauing many cauſes to alleadge againſt his aduerſaries, yet in ſilence endured both their iudgement and reproches, that wee with the ſame lenity and meeke- neſſe, ſhoulde forgiue other, euen as hee hath forgiuen vs.

1 Pet. 2. 12.

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Thirldy, by this also we obserue, that the laws both of God and men bee they neuer so sharpe, yet in some causes they may be moderated, according to the discretion of y^e magistrate, especially when they respect priuate persons. In this place the spitting on the face & the disgracing of the name of the man is omitted: which the Magistrates might haue constrained, if they pleased: neyther are they to bee blamed, for the party which was most grieued, by this denyall was best pleased, neyther did shee call for extremity. And as Christ would not in his iudgement, condemne or accuse the woman taken in adulterie, but bid her sinne no more, euen so the rigour of the Lawe is not to bee executed vpon euery offendour, but where hope of amendment is, there may bee a testimony of fauour. This is worthy doctrine for our dayes, wherein men lie in waite as the dragons doe for the Elephanes; to get their brethren within the compasse of the lawe, and though God his word and their owne conscience condemne them, yet if the lawe say it, deprive men of their liuings, Christians of their liberties, seruantes of their freedome, in the seruice of God, parentes of their children, wiues of their husbandes, Churches of their preachers, and no man dare open his mouth for them, that if Christ himselfe were on the earth againe in his humane shape, they neede no other argument but this: we haue a lawe, and by our law hee ought to die: But wo bee vnto you sayth the Prophet, that vrge the laws of Omri, that is, which dare maintaine the decrees of

John. 8. 1. princes against any of the Lordes seruantes: Surely it is an argument that men feare the creature aboue the Creator, which will not bee drawne from their lawes be they neuer so childish: but in our dayes it is most lamentable, that any good lawes shoulde bee wrested against the course of the Gospell, which were made for the enlarging thereof, such as is the forcing of men to abide with dumbe ministers, when the Gospell preached calleth for them at the nexte Church; But I speake not one worde agaynst lawful authority

Mich. 6. 16:

authority, or against the law, but onely the partiality of the executioners thereof, is worthy of blame, many times punishing severely where is no or little offence, and pardoning by sufferance notorious blasphemers. But let no Magistrates thinke when they may mitigate offences that they may altogether bury the force of the laws, when they shutte their eares agaynst the cry of them that complaine, or execute it not for fauour of friendshippe: But on the contrarie they must not in matters of iudgement repell any information or euidence: but if the party griued require extremitie, by wisdom they may perswade him; but by authoritie they cannot deny him: Finally in all thinges consider with the Apostle, not onely what is lawfull, but also what is expedient, that charity being ioyned with authority, loue may rather amend our faultes then law, and severity put vnto iustice, the greatest faultes may haue the sharpest punishmentes, that not the wordes, but the minde of the Law-maker may bee euer considered.

And Boaz, [said vnto the Elders] Now the ceremony being ended, the resignation deliuered, the holy Ghost proceedeth to expresse howe Bohaz receyued it, where he first of all calleth witnesse of the elders, and of the people, that now hee hath bought the inheritance of Elimelech, and whatsoeuer was Mahlons, & whatsoeuer was Chillions, he hath bought at the hand of Naomi: So that here he testifieth with the witnes before saide, that it shall bee as his owne in possession for euer.

Where first of all here commeth in question whether then it were, or now is lawfull to sell inheritances, which by this place appeareth to bee very lawfull, seeing Boaz buyeth that which was Elimelech: and if it bee so lawfull, then was Naboath in great fault, that hee did not depart from his in Iezreel: and so 1 Kings 1.3 might haue saued his life. But Naboath had the expresse law of God on his side, which commanded Leui. 25.23 that the lande should not bee solde to bee cut off

from any family: and giueth this reason of it, because they were but strangers in the lande, and sojourners, but the fee simple (as we call it) was onely the Lords: Therefore Naboth was not wrong, but had the lawe of God for his defence: nor yet Bohaz did not amisse, which bought Elimelechs possession or inheritance of Naomi. Therefore we must briefly set downe the conditions of sale, as they may be gathered out of the law of God:

- Leuit.* 25. First therefore these are the wordes, If thy brother
 25. bee impouerished and sell his possession, then his redeemer shall come, euen his neere kinsman, and buy
 26. out that which his brother hath solde: And if hee haue no redeemer, but his hande hath gotten to buy it out.
 27. Then shall he count the yeares of his sale, and restore the ouerplus to whom he sold it: so shall hee returne
 28. to his possession. But if he cannot get sufficient to restore to him, then that which is solde shall remaine in his hand that bought it, vntill the yeare of Iubilee: & in the Iubilee it shall come out, and he shal returne to his possession.

Out of these wordes we gather these propositions for certaine truth: First that for pouerty it was lawfull for men to sell away their inheritance: Secondly, that the nexte kinsman might redeeme it, and no man els beside him that solde it: and they might at any tyme redeeme it, neyther coulde the possessor deny him. Thirdely, that no sale of any lande was good or effectuall for any time after the yeare of Iubilee: By these three conclusions we may trie the tittle: Naomi was nowe impouerished, and therefore she might sell her inheritance to whome shee pleased, Bohaz was by substitution, the next kinsman, therefore he might lawfully buy it: For Naboth, he was neyther poore nor wanted, neyther was Ahab any of his kindred, and if it had once got into the kinges inheritance, who coulde euer haue required it againe,

There-

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Therefore Naboth was without blame in denying to sell his vineyard, and Bohaz without fault and blame for buying of Naomies: And Boaz knew that hee had the content of the seller, and therefore hee was the bolder. Then by this wee may gather, in what cause it is lawfull to buy or sell ones inheritance.

First it is lawfull to buy with the consent and good will of him that selleth: so wee reade howe Abraham bought a field of Ephron, after hee had first communed with his sonnes, and had their liking of his suite, and after at the gate of the citie, he had his assurance, Gen. 23. 17 and without this it is not lawfull at all to deale, for except the will be free and not compelled, it is no bargain before the Lord, but plaine robbery, and vniust dispossessing, because in the last commaundement the Lorde saith, Thou shalt not couet thy neighbors felde, or his house, or his Oxe, or his Asse, or any thing that is his, whereby is forbidden euery thought of couetousnesse, much more forcible and vniust dealing to compell men to departe from their inheritance: Therefore Ahab was blamed by Eliab, (though onely Iesabel wrought the murther) because hee knew it was forcible dealing, and hee ought not to haue entred, seeing the meanes of his death. But how many constrained purchases are there made, the Lorde onely knoweth, and the countrey euery where ringeth of them, where many by one meanes or other, are drinen to depart from their patrimonies, are left destitute of dwelling places, wiues without maintenance, children without inheritance, families brought to pouertie, by such dayly and vsuall purchasing.

Secondly, it is lawfull to buy if it bee publicquely done, not onely for the conueyance or assurance, but also for the price: Therefore Ephron made Abraham the price of foure hundred shekels in the gate of the Citty, and here Bohaz doth it before the elders. This is a most worthy consideration, because by the

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neglect of this pointe it commeth to passe, that great liuinges are done away for a songe, as the prouerbe is, young men priuately sell their patrimonies, their fathers being aliue, for little or nothing: others which haue not so much worldly wit, as were to bee wished, make priuate bargaynes of their landes, when they are in want or pouerty, wherein they sell them halfe for nothing. And thus younge men are deceyued with the sight of a little golde, vnwise and vnthrif- tie persons are cosoned, with nothing in regarde of the value of their inheritaunce, widdowes left com- fortlesse, children left harbourlesse, and the country troubled and pestred with such couetous encrochers, and why? because they make subtile and deceitfull bargaines in secrete, whereof they would bee a- shamed, if eyther before iudges, Elders or Magi- strates, this sale were propounded. Therefore by the rule of God his worde, wee holde him a thiefe and a robber, which hath thus bought to the hinderance of the seller.

Thirde, it is lawfull to buy for necessity house or landes, or any other thing lawfull to bee sold, the former conditions alwaies obserued, but it must not bee for vaine glory, or for the aduancing of their children or posterity, or that they might bee lande Lordes to many: Not euery one that is weal- thy, & hath much money must alway purchase land: the former example of Abraham proueth this: who being a very wealthy man: yet hee neuer offered to buy any lande, till Sara his wife was deade, and that was for necessity to bury her in. So did Iacob

Gen. 33. 19. his sonne buy a parcell of lande of Hemor the father of Shechem for an hundred peeces of silver, where- on hee pitched his tente, and builded an aultar: Hee might haue bought and purchased much more, as hee was able, but hee woulde not, onely a dwel- ling place and an Aultar roome hee prouided: sure- ly wee haue an infinite and great number that buy dwelling places, but few that giue any of their landes
or li-

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or liuings to builde aultars or Churches on. Nay, who
 seeth not how men sue dayly to pul downe the aulters,
 and to make arrable lande where they stande, that is,
 they pull personages and spirituall liuinges to their
 nests, they get away tithes and oblations, they enter
 vpon the lands and profits of the ministerie, & I think
 verily in many places they are grieved that the Chur-
 ches and Churchyardes are so big, because they would
 haue the more profite, these persons I warrant you are
 none of Iacobs children, nor Abrahams neyther, which
 haue taken to themselues the houses of God in posses-
 sion. Against these the Prophet cryeth, woe bee vnto Isa. 58.9
 them that ioynce house to house and field to field, that
 there might be no more place, that ye may bee placed
 by your selues in the mids of the earth: therefore heare
 their punishment. This saith the Lord is in my eares;
 surely many houses shalbe desolate, euen great and
 faire houses without inhabitants: This shal be the end
 of these couetous cormorantes, who desire to be the
 Lordes of the earth: And if good King Dauids poster-
 ity within a thousande yeares after him had not one
 house to lodge in, but euen in the same which was
 their fathers: Ioseph and Mary were faine to harbour
 in the stables, feare not you but your posteritie will be
 beggered within a hundred yeares after you, which
 neyther are so wealthy, or so godly as Dauid was, but
 I may sooner poure out my very heart, then make any
 forsake their purchasing, folouing a sinne is the desire
 of wealth that men choose it with abundance here for
 a season, & damnation there for euer, but let the godly
 vse the world as if they vsed it not, for the desire of mo-
 ney is the root of all euill.

But now we haue laboured for the buyers, whome
 I know will be more carefull of their profite, then my
 instruction, let vs in a word direct the sellers also before
 wee go from this point. If any demaunde wherefore,
 or for what causes they ought, or it may be lawfull for
 them to sell their possessions, I answer briefly, for these
 causes a man may, and for none else. First, to relieue
 his powertie, as being in sicknesse, for to recouer his
 health,

health being imprisoned for some good cause or lawfull debt, being taken a captiue to pay his ransome, or such like, all this is vnderstoode by the name of povertie, or any other meanes whereby a man may come into pouerty: for the Lord which gaue inheritaunces, gaue them for the benefite of the possessors, that they might be helpes vnto them in this miserable life, for they must euer esteeme more of their life then of their landes, of their libertie then their inheritance, of their

Gen. 47. 18.

19. welfare and health then riche sor wealth, and therefore the Lord permitted the Iewes to doe away their inheritance: and mention is made of a godly woman

Mark. 5. 25.

26. in the Gospell, that had spent all the substance she had vpon Phisitions, which is reported to magnify the goodnes of our Saujour vnto her, which cured her for nothing, and deferred to help her, til she had spent all, that shee might account more of her health, then her wealth, of the kindnes of Christ, then the cunning of the Phisitions, but I neede not many reasons to proue this, and therefore I will leaue it.

•

Secondly, a man may lawfully depart with some of his inheritaunge, to helpe him that hath none at all, eyther to sell it or giue it. So did Ephron sell Macpelah to Abraham that had none; so did Hemor sell a parcell of land to Iacob that had none, and vnto this I may referre the threshing floore of Arannah, which Dauid bought to build an Altar on, when the Lord stayed the plague. after he had numbred the people: this was to speciall vse, and therefore for some speciall causes I thinke it lawfull for men to giue or sell their inheritance. By this we learne what to iudge of them which are so farre from giuing or selling, that it is a hart-fore vnto them to see such goodly hospitals and almes houses erected for the poore, although not of their cost, yet to their grieve, for they had rather be fat-tered with the rent of the houses, then poore and miserable maïmed people shoulde bee fed with the reuenues: these persons thinke nothing well spent, but that which is bestowed in surfetting and pleasures, in costly apparell and dainty fare, thinking the time long

2 Sam. 24.

24.

25.

till these poore almes-mens gownes be turned into velvet coates, but I pray God their possessions may bee hospitals, not hospitalles their possessions. Other think much if a poor body get a little Cottage to be builded vpon the Commons or waste groundes, they had rather haue sties for their swine, then dwellings for such destitute soules: surely let them take heede, that their owne styes, I meane their houses wherein such fatte hogs as themselues are, liuing in pleasure & in follies, be not made worse then the silly houell of the other, and God curse them and their posterity, because they haue hated him in his pouerty: for if he which giueth to y poore do lend to the Lord, then he which reuileth the poore, reuileth (or as Salomon saith) scorneth his maker, then he which taketh from the poore shall rob the Lord, and sure his iudgement shall be very seuerẽ, and his damnation very swift.

Thirdly, it is lawfull to sell inheritances, and to bestowe or employ the money vpon the Church, so we reade of the primitiue Church, howe they which had land, sold it, and brought the money, & laid it downe at the Apostles feet, and therefore is that excellent and fearefull history of Ananias and Saphira his wife, who keeping backe but a part of the money that was their owne, and confirming it with a lie were sodaynely stroke dead. I woulde to God the niggardes of our age woulde consider this, which woulde deprive the poore of that which they owe them, and plucke from Church and ministry that which is giuen them. But of this latter disease, fewe are sicke in our daies, that they will sell their land to giue to the Church, rather spend it in gluttony for their belly, then liberality for their soule in good fellowship among ruffians, then christian charity among the faithfull, clothing themselves about their calling; that for a season they may liue like Gentlemen, and euer after in wofull slavery: these singing fooles of all other are most miserable, for their friends will not comfort them, their fellows will forsake them, their wealth will decay, but their woe shall be everlasting.

Act. 2. 45.

Lastly

Lastly, by this verse wee note, that women or widdowes had the rule of their husbandes inheritances, if they dyed without heyres, for here it is said, that Boaz buyeth it at the hand of Naomi, because she was her husbandes heire, and being past child bearing, had giue ouer her right to Ruth: this we haue already shewed you was the singuler care which the Lorde hath ouer poore desolate widdowes, that they should not be despised, although they were barren, and therefore, for their better preferment, willed the inheritaunce to descend vnto them: whereby wee may see it is no newe thing that women shoulde bee inheritours, for the daughters of Iob had inheritauces among their bre-

Iob. 42. 15. then, the daughters of Zelophehad had their fathers
Numb. 36. lor, and Caleb gaue his daughter Acsah with an inhe-

67. ritaunce vnto his kinsman Othoniel, which may suffice

Iud. 1. 13. for prooffe of this matter, for the perpetuities of inheri-

14. tances are condemned by God and man: but I would to God that the wealth of many women were not their xndooing, and their riches the cause of their casting away, especially where friendes haue aspiring mindes, there the miserie of maidens and widdowes falleth in nothing sooner, for setting them aloft with wealthie portions, and forgetting what they are in nature, their riches fall to vnthriftes, and themselues to lamentable want.

And moreover] After the landes, he descendeth to his marriage, which is described in this verse: wherein hee protesteth that he taketh the lands, that hee might also marry with the woman, and he marieth the woman for no other cause, but to stirre vp the name of the dead according to the commaundement of God: for what els should moue an olde man, to doe that in his withered age, which he refused in his lusty youth. By which wee first of all note, howe wisely Naomi dealt with her husbandes inheritance: she might haue kept it to get her selfe a good mariage, yet shee giueth it to Ruth: she might haue solde it to fill her purse, but she bestoweth it to preferre her daughter. Wherein she teacheth, vs with what loue wee must do for our children.

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dren, namely, that for them we must depart with our
 owne maintaynance, & vnto their good, not onely to
 the vttermoſt, but alſo beyond our power. And this is
 worthy to be noted of widdowes, which are wealthily
 left by their husbands, who are wont but little to care
 for their children, but to beſtowe their goods vppon
 youthfull companions: ſee here this Naomi hauing
 but a daughter in law, ſhe giueth her the whole inheri-
 tance, as if ſhe had bene borne for it: and truly, the
 onely cauſe (in regard of our ſelues) of all our wealth,
 is, that we might beſtow it vpon our childre, how grie-
 uous is it in many places to ſee both lands and liuinge
 conſumed by them, which neuer ſweet for them, and
 many poore children to whome of right they do per-
 taine to be deſtitute both of friends & maintaynance,
 and all through the wanton marriages of their youth-
 full mothers, but of this matter we haue ſpoken alrea-
 dy, and ſhalbe ſufficient to remember at this time.

Secondly, by this we may gather, that a mariage is a
 meere ciuill action, becauſe in the finiſhing thereof,
 there is not vſed either Priſt or Leuite, as we may ſee
 in this place, but is only pronounced by the man in the
 preſence of the elders, euen in the place of iudgment.
 Hence it commeth, that in auncient time we reade of
 mariages, but neuer celebrated in churches, but in pri-
 uate aſſemblies, except princes, which were wont to
 make great and generall feaſtes. For this inſtitution
 that mariages ſhould be kept in Churches, came vp of
 late many hundred yeares ſince the dayes of the A-
 poſtles: but yet muſt not be diſanulled, but obſerued
 as a holy and commendable order: firſt, for the auoy-
 ding of conſuſion, that thoſe which are fit, might bee
 ioyned together before the faithfull: ſecondly, for the
 more honour of the eſtate of matrimony, that they
 might know it was with all reuerence to be vndertake
 ſeeing they came as it were euen before the face of the
 almighty, there to be vnited. Thirdeſly, that it might be
 begun with moſt earneſt & ſeruent prayer, and there-
 vpon came ¶ miniſters to haue a hand in it. Fourthly,
 that it might be publiſhly knowne among all the con-
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gregation. Fifthly, that those mariages which were privately kept & concluded, might be accompted suspitions and vnlawful. Wherefore we must not in any wise breake this godly order of the Church of God, for as it was lawfull for the godly in old time to keepe them in houses, much more may the company of the faithfull now celebrate them in Churches, alwayes remembering, that we make it no article of our faith, but hold it necessary onely for order and vnity.

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Thirdly, by this we also obserue the end of all mariages, which is first for the commandement of God, and secondly for the increase of the Church. Both these are here set downe by Boaz in these words, *to stirre vp the name of the dead vpon his inheritance, & that the name of the deade bee not put out from among his brethren.* This was the speciall commaundement of God that hee should marry his kinsmans wife, and raise vp seed to his kinsman, which was as wee lately shewed you for the multiplying of the Church. By the which wee may examine all the intentions of mariage, whatsoeuer. First, if wee doe not take it in hande for the commandement of God, what hope can they euer haue of the blessing of the Lorde vppon them; like as a labourer which setteth himselfe to another mans worke without his consent, hath nothing for his paines, euen so all they whatsoeuer they be, which haue married of their owne braine, without respect to the lawe of God, can neuer haue or craue any blessing of the Lord vpon themselues or their posteritie: Oh fearefull consideration, worthy to bee considered of all them which vnaduisedly goe about to marry, for a wild tree bringeth forth sowre fruite, and wicked parentes which haue no regarde of holinesse in their mariages, doe seldom bring any wholesome fruit to y^e Lord. But some will say how shall wee know howe or in what sort to behaue our selues, that before wee marry, wee may ayme at nothing beside the commandement of God? Harken a little & I will briefly instruct you out of the word of God.

First

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First of all, the care of those that will bee married, must be for the onely blessing of God, which is the very finall cause of this institution. Therefore after the flood, the Lord in the restoring all things, amongst other confirming marriage, Moyses saith: And he blessed Noah and his sonnes, and saide, Increase and multiply, so that they which looke for any increase or fruite of their marriage, must first of all bee assured that the Lord hath blessed them. But how shall we obtaine this blessing of God? I aunswere, by diligent reading of his word, and by prayer. Dauid asking this question, wherewithall a young man shall cleanse his way? and then hee aunswereth himselfe and saith, euen by taking heede vnto thy word. And Paule saith, that the vnmarried care for the things that please the Lord as if he had saide, they must remaine vnmarried for no other cause, but that they might the more freely giue themselves to the seruice of God. If a man want faith, hee may obtaine it by prayer, and if hee want the blessing of God vpon his marriage, which is a lesse thing then faith, may hee not obtaine it by prayer? Isaac hauing beene married twentie yeares, yet was without children, and then hee prayed for issue, and the Lorde gaue him two at one time, and may not prayer obtaine this for the vnmarried as well as for the married? yes verily, if either woulde take the paines to vse it. But oh who are they that euer in their liues once offered of their prayers to God to blesse them with wiues and husbands? that is, that they might be so married as the name of God might be glorified by them. Nay, what young man or woman amongst a thousande in these daies, that it is delighted with cyther prayer or preaching, but rather affect nothing but libertie, pleasure, and pastime, they neuer thinke of, any neede they stande of these thinges, but rather imagine that their youthfull dayes and yeares must bee consumed in riotous sportes, and wanton wandrings, so that most men and maidens come by their wiues and husbands at feasting and dauncing, by dallying and playing;

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chosen by outwarde apparell, not inwarde and secret vertues, which are wonne with vanity, kept with pride, and forsaken to the destruction of wiues & husbands, therefore first seeke the kingdome of God, and the righteousnes thereof, and all other things shall be cast vpon you.

2. Secondly, the intention of them that marry for the commandement of God, is that thereby they might liue more soberly in their seuerall vocations; for as the wanton oxe is bridled in the yoke, so vnruled youth is gouerned by marriage, for if wee regarde the mind of them that marry, it is stayed vpon one, if the company of the body, it is bound to one, if life, it can not be solitarie, if wealth, it must not be possessed alone. Therefore Peter said, husbands dwell with your wiues like men of knowledge, as if he had saide, in your vnmarried time you were wanderers, but nowe you are married you are dwellers, in your vnmarried age you were inconstant, but now you are married you are as vn moueable as a house; when you were single, you were ignorant, but nowe you bee married, be men of knowledge: and finally when you were young, you were troubled with the desire of many, but now you are married you are comforted with the loue of one, & as a man without a dwelling place, so is the vnmarried without a companion. Such is the commodity of marriage, if it bee duely considered, and ech party rightly instructed, that it is as sleepe to a weary man, as wine to the thirstie, as a house to the harbourlesse, and as a garment against winter; and therefore it is compared to the fellowship of Christ with his Church. How then commeth it to passe that men liue more riotously being married then when they are vnmarried, for they amend nothing, but thinke all things as lawfull for them then as it was before, their houses without their presence, their wiues without their company, their families without their gouernement, so that you shall see married persons wandring abroad, as if they were vnmarried, disporting themselues as shamefully and as loosely as any in the world: not liuing in sobriety and modesty like

1 Pet. 3. 7.

Ephes. 5. 5

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like the turtle Dove, but in gaming and dauncing like the wanton Goate; these parties neuer married for the commaundement of God, but some rashie desire possessed their minds, and a little youthfull lust tickled their fancies, much like the saour of Iuniper, which continueth but a little while. Other are so farre from this point to marry, that they might liue more soberly, that they make their marriages the couer of their dishonesty making the world belecue they liue in perfect chastity, because they are maryed, but priuily they giue themselves to most filthy adulteries: but the Apostle sayth, mariage is honourable, but adul. Heb. 13. 4. terers God will iudge, that is, will vtterly condemne; and if their behauiours were well examined, you should find this the cause, that their houses cannot hold them, the filthinesse of these parties is condemned by the very brute beastes, and shall bee punished by the seuerer iudgement of God: for they which make the members of Christ the members of harlots, shall bee with harlots the members of the deuill: therefore marry for modesty, not for filthinesse, that your vngouerned age may be bridleed with the consideration of your present estate, your wearyed daies may be quieted in the bed of godly, holy, and honourable mariage.

Thirdly, they which marry for obedience vnto God, must only mind godly and not wealthy matches, they must looke on the heart not on the face, they must waigh the disposition, and not the riches, they must not say as the deuill said to Christ, all this will I giue, but they must say, as Iacobs sonnes saide to Shechem, Mat 4. and Hemor, if you will be circumcised you shall haue Gen. 34. 15 our sister: that is, if you feare God, and receiue his true knowledge, if you loue his word and honour his sacraments, if you can benefite the soules as well as the bodies: But a man may weary himselfe many dayes before hee finde any of this inclination, for parents will deny their consents, if they see not the riches for their daughters husbands, or sonnes wities, keeping them in continuall burning, for lacke of this wealthy
R licour,

licour; And I know many parents which haue cast off their children for poore mariages, but neuer any for the wealthy, were they neuer so wicked, therefore whosoeuer for this cause, denyeth right to his childe, shall bee more faulty for their vngodly disposition, then the children for their vnaduised mariage. Nowe in these dayes, it is a wonder to see howe the mindes of men and women can loue for wealth, that euen as a harlot humbleth her selfe for money to him, whome otherwise she woulde not looke vpon, so men and women will marry themselues for wealth, where if there were pouerty, they woulde thinke them vnworthy to bee their seruantes. I maruaile if the heathen lawe were nowe in force, that no man shoulde giue any thing to their daughters marriage, in what time of their dayes woulde these men marry, truly I thinke they woulde neuer marry, except it were to make drudges of their wiues. But these are not of Bohaz his mind, for he marieth a straunger who had but little wealth, because the Lorde so commaunded to take his kinsmans wife, although hee might haue refused yet hee was contented for this cause, to buy her as hee sayth in this verse, to teach vs, that if God bid vs to marry, that is, if wee finde in our owne consciences that wee cannot liue otherwise, then rather aduenture thy wealth, then the displeasure of God. But some will say, is it not lawfull to desire and to sue for wealthy mariages? Yes verily with this affection, that thou like thy choyse as well if there were little, as now there is much. And therefore thou must euermore remember these cautions, both in the choosing and vsing of a wealthy marriage. First that thou desire it, to the intent thou mayest bee more able to doe good, to thy bretheren that want, for it is a more blessed thing to giue, then to receyue. Secondly, that thou mayest the more freely giue thy selfe priuately, and publikely, to the seruice of God; for wee knowe that pouerty taketh our greatest time to labour for wife and family, but the wealthy neede lesse labour, and may applie the
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Act. 20. 35.

2.

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more time to the seruice of God, therefore was it that Paule said, the married care for the thinges of this life to please their wiues: shewing, that it is one misery vpon the poore when they are maryed, that they are troubled about worldly and necessary prouision, but if these thinges be supplied by a good marriage, thou mayest prayse God with the greater diligence.

1. Cor. 7. 34

But who are they which haue desired or obtayned a wealthy marriage for eyther of these causes? if the poore should goe in collection for reliefe of them which for this occasion haue richly ioyned themselves, what should they gather? or how far should they goe? to how many persons might they come, before they get a shilling? Truly for this cause they desire them, some, that they might lauish out the more in riotous expenses, with the rich man in the Gospell, to feed in pleasure, to be cloathed in silke, to maintayne dogges, houndes, haukes, horses, and retinues of idle men, but neuer the Church of God fareth the better for them. Againe by their wealth, they haue idlenesse and time to wander abroad, heere to feast and make merry, there to playe and disporte themselves in bodily exercises, and worldly vanities, but neuer one houre the more is spent in the seruice of God, but much the lesse, for the Devils sweete and pleasant baytes draw away their mindes from the consideration of their owne miseries. Againe, they are many times a thousand fold more clogged with the cares of their wealth, then the poorest soule to prouide breade for his family by his bodily labour. Lastly, their desire is to leaue great possessions to their posterity, that the honour of their houses may be increased, and the name of their memory might bee cuerlastingly recorded, so that neyther the glory of God, the promoting of the Gospell, the relieuing of the faythfull, or the succouring of Iesus Christ himselfe, is any parte of the thought of these couetous wretches, but as they desire the inheritaunces of the Lord

to be their portion in this present life, so they haue them for the canker of their soules, the rust to consume them, the care to torment them, the feare to forsake them, the loue to enioy them, the trauaile to increase them, and the reckoning for abusing them to their endlesse confusion. Therefore except the Lord doe build the house, their labour is but in vaine that build it, except the Lorde make the marriage, the riches of Salomon cannot continue them, for better is a litle that the righteous hath, then the great possessions of the vngodly.

Psal. 37. 16.

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Gen. 24. 35.

Rebecca.

Gen. 30. 32

33.

Lastly, he that marrieth for obedience vnto God, must haue this care to provide before hand things honest and lawfull for the present mainenance of wife and family. Therefore when Abrahams seruant came to the City of Nachor, among others which he told vnto Laban, and the mother of Ribkah, hee shewed them what cattell, and flocks, seruants and maidens his maister had, which all should be Izaaks, thereby signifying, that all necessary prouision for their mainenance was already procured, and there wanted nothing, but a wife for Izaak. So Iacob after his foure teene yeares seruice with Laban, couenaunteth to haue the profite of the flocks which should be spotted, and this was when he knew he was to depart from his father in law, and therefore was bound to provide for himselfe. Nowe this prouision is not so meant, as though euery one were bound to get all thinges before hand which are needfull to marriage, but it is required that euery one shoulde procure somewhat according to their degree, and the mainenance of their calling. This point is clearer then the sunne; and it serueth to the reproouing of them, which runne headlong to marry one day, but fall into wofull beggery the next, neyther houses to dwell in, labour to worke on, meat to sustaine them, money to procure them, friends to relieue them, or credite to helpe them, onely wiues and husbands they must needs haue, not caring what shall become of them afterwarde. And truely, if the hurte did onely redounde to their

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owne hinderance, the pittie was the lesse, but wofull it is to tell how their miserable posterity are thereby (euen through their parents rashnes) brought to euerm-lasting pouertie, and such as is most lamentable, for their mindes are not instructed, they haue no knowledge of the true God, neyther can they pray to their comfort, or hope for any saluation. If it were but the labour and pouertie of the bodie, it were much to be desired, and nothing to bee feared, but being the endangering of both body and soule, how much is it to be dislyked, that any for their owne lusts shoulde leaue their wretched posteritie to the power of the de-will. Therefore beloued, counsell your acquaintance to be carefull for their children as well as themselves, first to try and then to trust, first to prepare somewhat, that if sicknesse come, or charges come, or age ouertake thee, yet then thou mayest comfort thy selfe with thy owne gotten goods, and rather be helpfull, then chargeable to any.

Fourthly, by this that Boaz saith, hee taketh Ruth to wife, for to stirre vp the name of the deade, and that the name of the deade bee no more forgotten among his brethren in the gate of his place: We note, that our mariages must be taken in hand also to this end, for the multiplying of the Church of God, wee haue already shewed howe one cause of this brothers marriage was for that vse and purpose, and in this place not vnnecessary to confirme. For the lawe of this marriage was speciall onely for God his people, and therefore for the augmenting of the number of the Lords flocke. And as this was among the Iewes, that euery family might haue some temporall inheritours, euen so is it among the Gentiles, that if it bee possible, euery one should bring one infant or other, to be an inheritour of the Lordes kingdome. By the which parents are taught to bee more carefull for the education and instruction of their children, then for their procreation and birth, for they are made the fathers and mothers of Christ in his members; there-

fore they must not leaue him to Herode, that is, they must not giue their children to the power of Sathan by their negligence and want of teaching: they are accursed that lay stumbling blocks before the blinde, and shall not they also that leade them into the sea, where is nothing but drowning? euen so if godlesse parentes doe leade their children and innocent babes into damnable ignorance, who shall aunswere for their soules? shall not the authours of this destruction? Had not parentes neede then to looke to themselves, for if they haue as much golde as Salomon had, and as great inheritaunces as Caleb had, and as much possession of Cattell as Iob had, yet if they bee not able to bring vp their children in the feare of God, it were better for parentes and children they had neuer beene borne, then miserably to liue in wealth, and bee euery houre in daunger of damnation. But how then will you say, must we be carefull for the instruction of our children? I answere, you must bee carefull of these two things: first, that you teach them that which is good, secondly, that you giue no euill example vnto them.

Concerning the first, for the teaching of them the truth, you must first teach them the matter of their faith, and secondly howe to pray. The matter of their faith, is contained in the twelue articles, commonly called our Creede or beliefe, which euery father and mother is bounde to teach their children, with the pure vnderstanding thereof, and as they bee able to shewe them the proofes thereof out of the worde of God, I meane as the children bee able to receyue it. Herein they must instruct them of the miserable estate of mankind after their fall, by the vse and vnderstanding of the morall lawe, contayned in the two tables of the tenne Commaundementes, with the proofes thereof out of the Scripture, and the deliuerance by the death and bloudshedding of Iesus Christ the eternall and onely begotten sonne of God.

Againe,

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Againe, you must teach them to pray according as the Lord hath taught vs in that forme which wee call the Lords prayer, with the vnderstanding thereof out of the worde of God, for except you teach them what they pray for by the vnderstanding of it, you were as good to teach them in Greeke or Latine as in English. For there are many thousandes in Englande that call God Father in their prayers, but I knowe not that there bee any which knowe the meaning of the word. I my selfe haue reasoned with many both young and olde, and of men of good calling in the worlde, about that one worde, which is the easiest and plainest in all the worde of God, but some fewe excepted, which haue laboured for knowledge in the hearing of Sermons, I neuer met with man, woman, nor childe, that could giue mee any resonable aunswere vnto this question beside this, that God made them, and therefore is their Father, which euery Iewe and almost euery Pagan knoweth as well as they: Therefore as our righteousness must exceede the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, Jewes and Gentiles, so must our knowledge also, for by our knowledge of Christ wee are iustified to bee his members. And Mat. 6. 9. Isa. 53. 17. although wee repeat the Lordes prayer a thousand tymes euery day, and vnderstande it not, wee doe but bable before the Lord, taking his name in vaine, vsing it in our lips, when our heartes haue no vnderstanding, and therefore our prayers are without fruite.

Lastly, if you your selues doe not walke before them without reproofe, in pure and sanctified conuersations, whatsoeuer you teach them, you presently treade out againe, for simple people and young children liue by examples, and not by precept: If you teach them to worship God, you must also before their faces worship the same, that they may practise by your example. If you bid them that they sweare not, you your selfe must be carefull not

to sweare or else they will not belieue you, for as the people looke vpon the life of their pastour, so the young children beholde the steppes of their parentes. And wee see in bruit beastes that examples are much more effectuall then preceptes, they cannot speake, yet how do they traine their young ones. It is reported of the Hartes of Scythia, that they teach their young ones to leape from banke to banke, from rock to rocke, from one turfe to another by their owne example, leaping before them, which otherwise they would neuer practise, by which meanes when they are hunted no beast can euer take them. Euen so, if you goe before your children in examples while they are young, Sathan the hunter and roaring Lion shall neuer haue them for his pray. When they learne to speake, they take the words from our owne mouthe, euen so when they shall learne to worship, feare loue, honour, and pray vnto the Lord, let them take you for their examples,

Gen. 31. 53

as Iacob did Abraham
and Izaak.

Now let vs giue praise
to God.



The fourteenth Lecture.

Chap. 4. ver. 11. 12.

- 11 *And all the people that were in the gate, & the elders saide, we are witnesses: The Lord make the wife that cometh into thy house, like Rahel and Leah, which twain did build the house of Israel, & that thou maiest doe worthely in Ephratah, and bee famous in Bethle- hem.*
- 12 *And that thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Thamar bare vnto Iudah, of the seede which the Lord shall giue thee of this young woman.*



So we haue hitherto heard of Boaz & his kinseman; the one in resigning, & the other in receyuing his right, in the place of iudgment, and the presence of the elders and people: So now the holy Ghost proceedeth to declare vnto vs, the behauiour of this latter sort at this marriage of Bohaz: which is their aunswere vnto that speech of Bohaz: when hee calleth them to witnesse the bargaine.

The wordes doe easily deuide themselues into two partes, the first is their confessions to be witnesses of the contract, in these wordes: *Then spake all the people and elders, we are witnesser.* The second part is the prayer they make for Boaz and Ruth in the next wordes consisting of two partes; the first is the fruitfulness of Ruth, when they pray she may be like *Rahel & Leah*: that he may bee wealthy in *Ephratah*, and famous in *Bethlehem*: The second member of this seconde parte is for the blessing of God vpon the posterity of these two new married persons: In the 12. verse, that their house might be like the house of Pharez the sonne of Iudah, which till that time, had the chiefest dignitie in the tribe of Iudah, and so continued till the scepter

was taken from Zudah, & the lawgiuer from betweene his secte, which was almost fiftene hundred yeares, vntill the raigne of the Idumean Herode: Of these parts let vs briefly speake in order, by the assistance of God his heauenly spirite, and the permission of the time.

And all the people] These wordes as we shewed you are the first part, wherein the rulers & people acknowledge their testimony with one consent, freely yeelding vnto the request of Bohaz, and willingly reioycing at that so strange a matter, when one of the chiefe of their elders, for loue of the lawe of God, would to his owne discommodity, marry with a straunger, and so base a woman, looking neither on birth nor wealth but on the hidden man of the heart, making vertue his choise and religion his portion: Out of which we note.

First, that it is the duty of the godly willingly in any good matter to giue their testimony for their brethren: for men in this latter age are growen so feareful, that they will hardly testifie the truth, for dreade of some euill that might ensue thereby, these persons are not of the mind of these godly Iewes, both elders and other in this place, which of their owne accorde, giue witnesse vnto Bohaz for the purchase of his land, and the marriage of his wife, so wee reade the people witnessed with Samuel when Saul was chosen king: yea
 3^d against their own selues, because they had refused him to bee their king, and chose a king to raigne ouer them, after the manner of the heathen. This is the more worthy to bee considered in this place, because this people did not after any scoffing manner, but soberly and in the feare of God (as appeareth by their prayer) witnesse this contract vnto Bohaz: the world in these dayes, if the like thing shoulde fall out, that an old man in the presence of so great a congregation should take to his wife so young a woman, would rather mocke, scorne and disdaine it, then with such reuerent modesty pray for it: For herein the world sheweth it selfe, which is wont to condemne that in others,
 which

3 Sam. 13.4

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which in themselves they highly commend, and to looke but vpon the outward appearance, discerning and iudging but with bodily eyes and carnall minds, yet here these Iewes Bethlemites, shall speake for the godly not deriding strange actions, nor denying their voyces to a lawfull condition, nor iudging but with a spirituall eye, pearcing through the barke of humane body, into the soule of a godly olde man: and this is the more commendable because the magistrates and elders themselves ioyned them to the people in so godly proceeding, by whose example it is no doubt, the wa- uering multitude was much encouraged. And this tea- cheth vs how excellent is the profession and forward- nesse of men in authoritie, vpon whom the eyes of the common wealth dependeth: they are neuer alone, but as all beasts and creatures followed Noah into his arke because he went before; so all sorts will follow their disposition be it good or euill: Wee reade of the wic- ked iudges of Iezrael which condemned innocent Na- boath had also wicked witnessers against him, for such as Ahab and Jezabell were, such were their iudges, & such as the iudges were, the same were the people, if they be godly, the lights of their liues will shine vnto others, if they bee profane, their darkenes is like the darknes of Egypt which spread it self ouer all the land. Oh how comfortable is your presence at our godly as- semblies to y despised members of Christ: if you come many some: if you abide at home, many follow your steppes, the souldiers will follow their captaines, in- to the hottest skirmishes, but without them, it is a grieue to go into the easiest battels, so right worshipful, if you continue your diligence in hearing the Gospell, wee your subiectes and seruantes will followe you to the farthest, but if you fall away, we are discouraged also: one word of your mouthes in the commenda- tion of goodnes, is like golden apples in dishes of sil- uer; but one steppe of your trauaile to the mountaine of Sion, the company of the faithfull is like the com- pany of Jonathan and his armour bearer, to driue a
whole armie of vngodly Philistines from the tentes of
Gods

1 King: 21:
12-13.

1. Sam. 14-
16.

Jud. 7. 20.

Act. 8. 27.

Luc. 14

Act. 11.

Act. 17. 4

Gods saints: If Gedeon be once named, what are the company of Madianites: if the Magistrate or gentleman frequent the exercises of religion, all the mouthes of the swinish Atheistes, which tread the pearles of the Gospell vnder their feete, are stopped. Looke vpon *ſ* Eunuch to Queen Candaces, which came euery year many hundred miles to worship at Ierusalem: he was a noble man, yet it was discredite to his honour to be diligent in God his seruice. Looke vpon that noble Theophilus to whome Luke dedicateth his bookes, when all the world persecuted Christ, yet hee suffered his name to be formost in *ſ* Gospell, that none should be discouraged at the profession of Christ, when such a noble man would suffer his name to go publickly in the booke. Looke vpon the noble woman of Thessalonica, which in greatest danger ioyned themselves to the profession of the Gospell. Looke vpon that excellent Lady, to whom Iohn writeth his seconde epistle, and her sister also, whose children fauoured and confessed the Gospell, as well as the parents, the day would not suffice to follow all *ſ* I might, these went before in the world, and before in the Lorde, that is, they were noted in wealth, but notable in religion, they were singular in authority, but excellent in christianity, the memory of their wealth is lost, but the recorde of their faith remaineth registred in God his booke for euer, These men and women were worthy of their places, such as could rule their riches by the word, feed their seruants with the Gospell, and cloath their soules with Iesus Christ.

2.

Act. 2. 46

Secondly, by this we note, that seeing they all witnessed, and they all prayed for Boaz, the dutie of them *ſ* are gathered together in any godly assembly, which is to ioyne themselves in the same holy exercises, if they heare the other must heare; if they pray the other must pray: if they sing, the other must also sing: for this is the fellowshippe of the saints, or els nothing is: When we read the church of God continued together in breaking breade: it is also said they continued in prayer, as if the holy Ghost had said, as if euery one did eat bread.

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so euery one did pray to the Lord, as it auayleth not a hungry man to see another eat, & he haue none, but rather increaseth his desire, so if you bee euery day and hour where praiers are made, & your selues tast not of the, it doth but increase your damnation. So we reade Act. 4. 13.
 where the Apostles were forbidden to preach in the name of Christ, they came to their fellows & lift vp their voices with one accord to the Lord, and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled, and they all were filled with the holy Ghost, and spake the word of God boldly, such is the effect of God his faithful, when they pray vnto him with one accord, like the assault of the foure winds vpon Iobs childrens house, which not onely shooke but also ouerturned the same: many hands make a great labour to be lightly dispatched, and many mens prayers doe pull downe the mercies of God vpon vs. This I think is very needfull for our daies, wherein this dulnes is growne so grosse, that among a Churchfull of hearers, you shall haue very few which are not faultie in this doctrine: for it is a worlde to see how many haue their bodies at the sermons, but their soules and affections are wandering in a thousand matters: these pray not when we pray, heare not when wee preach, neyther sing when we sing. What profite haue these persons by our prayers, or preaching: surely they are Idols, they haue tongues but speake not, eares but heare not, eyes but they see not. And this is most lamentable, to see many vpon whom the Lord hath bestowed this gift of reading or learning, to come hand ouer head to Churches, without eyther booke or minde to profite themselves or other: Thus they bury the graces of God in them, they quench the fire of the holy spirit, they loose the costes of their parents, which they bestowed to bring them to learning, they disdain to sing with the faythfull, they abhorre the labours of their youth, & mocke the Lord with their presence: Looke vpon it my brethren, for if the Lord haue giuen any of you learning, that you are able to read his worde, then hee hath planted you to beare fruit in his owne orchard, but if you vse

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not this gift then you are fruitlesse trees, and the Lord will cut you downe and cast you into vnquenchable fire, if you say you haue no books, I answer, the fault lyeth in your selues, for if you be poore aske the godly and your want shall bee supplied: if you be wealthy saue some of your idle expenses to spende vppon such a holy businesse. If you say you forget your bookes behinde you, I answer it is a signe you care but little for your iourneyes ende, for if you had that reuerence, to come prepared to the exercises of the faithfull which you ought to haue, you coulde not forget your bibles, nay you shoulde rather forget your apparell, then your bookes, if you considered as it becommeth you. But some say, they vnderstande well enough though they say not amen to our prayers, and though they sing not to the Lorde with vs, but Paule sayth to such, that they do no good to their brethren, because they edifie them not, and that it is better in the Church to speake few wordes to instruct others, then ten thousand for his owne benefite: for in the Church we are assembled for our brethren, not for our selues onely, and whosoever prayeth not with his brethren in the Church or congregation, doth breake the fellowship of the faithfull, and standeth for a cipher among the saintes: Therefore if you haue any care of your duty to the Lord, of the loue of y^e faithful, of obedience to your parents, of increasing your talent of learning, or the saluation of your owne soules, both magistrate and subiect, elders and people, riche and poore old and younge, men and women, fulfill the expectation of the godly, pray when wee pray, sing with vs when we sing, heare vs when we preach: for with such sacrifice is the Lord pleased.

The Lord make] Nowe wee haue made an ende of the first part, let vs go to the second, which is the prayer of these people and elders, the first member whereof is contained in these words, wherein they pray for the fruitfulness of Ruth, alleading an example to testifie the loue they beare to Bohaz that they desire his wife to bee as fruitfull as eyther Leah, or Rahell, who builded

1. Cor. 14

16. 17

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builded the house of Israel, so that they would haue him the father of much people, in so much as his name both of wealth and children might aduance the dignity of Bethlehem Ephrathah.

First therefore hence wee note the duty of all the godly which is to pray for the welfare one of another, but especially in mariage, for the prayers of the faithfull are as needfull for the married as skillfull mariners in the boat of passengers. Therefore we read of few godly mariages in the scripture, but they were celebrated with prayer, when Rebecca was marryed to Isaacke, her mother, brother and friendes, praied that she might grow vp into thousand thousands, and her seed to possesse their enemies gate: and in this place these friends of Boaz pray the like for Ruth, for what make the peoples presence, the multitude of lookers, the number of acquaintance, at the time of celebrating mariages, except it bee to pray for the parties, wee haue shewed you the last Sabbath, that for the ignorance of the people, which coulde not pray, came the ministers to haue a hand in it, for supplying their want: and how lamentable is it to see in many places, and most persons that are married, where their companie are none but godlesse ruffians, ignoraunt Atheistes, prophane swearers, and notable blasphemers, to bee present at their vnhappy weddinges, what prayers can these powre forth, for their newe marryed friendes, can the Cockatrice breath forth any thing but poyson, or the spider spinne any sounder cloth then her webbe; no more can these persons but curse them with their prayers, not bleisſe them with their cursinges: Is it not a worlde to see howe many against their mariages compasse the countrey, some to provide delicate diuersities of meates, to feede both the belly and the eye, others to inuite their friendes which come ruffling into the Churches, in silkes, veluets, fattens, and soft apparell, & some to decke vp theselues in braue clothing, against their mariage day, but neuer one thought for the faithfull prayer of the godly, that their prosperous life may bee blessed in wedlocke

Gen. 24. 60.

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wedlocke, this they ought to be most carefull for, and yet not to leaue the other vndone, but godly prayers are better then great portions, and it is better to haue poore Christ at your weddings, then a thousand thousand of these glistering gallants. Truly in these dayes how do men and women prouide for mirth, not for modesty, that their day of marriage may bee ioyfull with worldly disports, not godly with Christian exercises: they buy and hire musitians to passe the time in pleasant dauncing, but neuer intreat or speake one word to the godly, to bestow their hearty prayers vpon them: Let therefore beloued, this be our direction, that as we marry for the Lord, not for the worlde, so wee study for praier and not for pleasure.

2. Secondly, by this we gather that the greatest blessing in marriage is the bearing of children, the blessing vpon the vyne, is to bring many grapes, the blessing vpon the earth is to be fruitfull in bringing and springing much corne and pasture: the blessing on the sea, is the multiplying of the fish, and the blessing of marriage is many children: Therefore in this place they pray that Ruth might be like Rahel and Leah, which builded all *Izrael*, that is, they were the mothers of a great nation, they multiplyed in their posterity to a number like the starres of heauen. For this cause the first blessing vpon mankind after the floode, was that they should increase and fill the earth, for this cause the fathers desired children so much, & the ouerloue of many children, encreased the multitude of their wiues: & for this cause the Apostle saith, that womē through bearing of children shall be saued, if they continue in faith, and loue, and holinesse with modesty. For all other blessings may be had without marriage, wealth and riches, comfort and friends, honour and pleasure, quietnesse and rest, may bee founde in the liues of vnmarried persons, onely children must come of a grafted stocke, which is a holy and sanctified marriage, or wedlocke: When Abraham wanted a sonne he praied for one: when Rebecca was barren, Isaacke prayed for her, and she conceaued: When Maioah wanted children

Gen 9, 1.

1 Tim. 2, 15

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children, hee prayed, and the Lorde gaue him Sampson: when Amah was barren, shee prayed and obtayned Samuel: and when Zacharie and Elizabeth had no issue, by prayer they obtayned Iohn Baptist. So they accompted of their marriage without children, as a faire and pleasant garden without frutes, and as the one doeth fructifie by seasonable showers, so the other doth multiply by faithfull supplications: Therefore here this people of God pray for Bohaz & Ruth, that many pleasaunt twiggess may spring out of their fruitfull bodies. By the which wee see the ready remedy for barrenesse, which are godly and zealous prayers, powdered forth into the eares of the Almighty, that he would remoue his hande from punishing, and withdrawe the curse of barrenesse from penitent sinners. But in our prayers we must alway take heede that we appoint not the Lord what he shall giue vs, eyther sonnes or daughters, but rest vpon the will of God to receyue cyther of both. And indeede be it that children are the greatest blessing of marriage, yett all things considered, it is much happier to bee barren, for our miserable dayes, and sinfull liues call for a scourge, and once more the saying of Christ shall bee fulfilled, that there shall be woe to them that are with child, and that giue sucke in those dayes, yea vndoubtedly our posterity count them happy that are vnborne, and themselues shall wish with Iob and Jeremy they had neuer seene the sunne. Oh who are they that haue any desire of many children? Looke vpon the worlde, it falleth to Atheisme: Looke vpon the Church, it declyneth to errour: looke vpon the Gospel, it is persecuted by the Deuill, and viewe euery degree, if corruption groweth not vpon them: truly, truly as Esau saide, the dayes of mourning for my father will shortly come, so may all the faithfull say, the day of mourning for the Gospel & knowledge will one day come, and the Lorde knoweth how soone. Therefore if you would leaue your children to be Atheistes, your issue to bee heretickes, your posterity to bee afflicted, and all your offspring to bee corrupted, and miserably punished in this life, or eternally plagued in the life to

Mat. 23

Gen. 27

come, then desire little children, be it you can provide landes to maintaine them, teachers to instruct them, learning to defend them, honour to aduance the, friends to assist them, & castles of security to keepe them from the hurt of the worlde: yet alas, alas, into how many thousand aduersities may their soules descend, I speake not this to discourage any from desiring children, but I admonish from the Lorde that you bee wise in your petitions, and thinke as well of your infantes misery, as your owne suffering: nowe you desire ease without paynes, but they in all manner of afflictions may sende vp cries to the heauens and not bee hearde. Oh that all degrees both married, and vnamarried would haue pity on their posterity, before they be borne, then shoulde fewer be vagabondes then now are, & more bee prouided for then nowe can bee, then should men and women for their childrens sake amend their loose and desperate behauiour not fit for Pagans, much lesse for Christians, lest the children should be plagued for the fathers fault: Assuredly beloued, the Lorde hath spoken it, that if your children proue wicked, they shall suffer & beare the sins of all their ancestors, yea though they be dead many hundred yeares agoe.

Thirdely, by this prayer of these elders and people, we note that for the helping of our weakenes in prayer, and releeuing of our wantes, wee may set before vs the goodnes of God vnto others. In this place they pray that Ruth may be as fruitfull as Rahel and Leah which were the wiues of Iacob, who bare him eyght sonnes and one daughter, expressing their hearty prayer for Bohaz and Ruth, by the example of these twaine. The like wee may reade of the Apostles, when they prayed after their deliuerance from the rulers and elders, they alleadge Dauid for their helpe, as hee speaketh in the seconde Psalm: For we many times know not what to aske as wee ought, but the spirite which wrought these giftes in the fathers, helpeth our infirmitie by the examples of the auncient godly, that wee shoulde aske the same graces which they enioyed, to leade the same liues which they liued, and obtaine the same

crown,

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crowne, wherewith they are all rewarded. Yet we must alway remember the rule of the Apostle, that this is our assurance, if we craue any thing according to his will, we receyue it: that is, wee must not desire the least thing in worldly affaires, but vnder this condition, if it be thy will O God, because the Lord is not bound to giue vs any thing, no more then we are to giue euery begger that asketh an almes of vs, but if we absolutely craue without this exception, wee breake the lawe of prayer and bring the maiesty of God into bondage by our petitions.

This teacheth vs this profitable lesson, that before we pray, wee shoulde learne and consider our wantes by the worde of God, that wee aske not at the hands of the Almighty, any thing beside that which is godly, honest and lawfull: for many I am perswaded, doe sodainely and vnaduisedly start vp into the presence of the Lorde with rash and vngodly desires, because they want the knowledge of the word of God, and the due consideration of those thinges which they want. Of this sort are all the prayers of the Papistes, for they neither vnderstande their prayers in a strange tongue, nor yet will examine them by the worde of God: Vnto these I adde the prayers and wishes of the ignoraunt multitude, which are as farre from the true prayers of the faithfull, as the Moone is from the earth: For as it is impossible for a man to goe without his legges, or to see without his eyes, so it is impossible for these to pray without the knowledge of the Gospell: For in our prayers wee must speake to the Lorde in his owne tongue, as hee speaketh in his worde, but what can these persons bring out of the treasures of the holy scriptures? scant one sentence in the whole Gospell rightly vnderstoode, how then can they bring the matter of their whole prayers, if they want but one thing that will suffice? but who is liuing which standeth not in neede of many thousande mercies? But I knowe their olde excuse, for they say they pray according to the Scripture, when they repeat the Lordes prayer, which is set downe in the Scripture:

1 Ioh. 5. 14

Mat. 6. 9

to whom I answered, they doe well if they vnderstande it, but where doe they finde those wishes to grow rich, those curses vpon them with whome they are angrie, whether it be man or beast, and tell me the vnderstanding of one petition in the Lordes prayer. Therefore beloued, pray in spirite, but pray in vnderstanding also, vse the scripture for the rule of your supplication, for as no man can say that Iesus is the Lord, but onely by the Spirit of God; so none can pray rightly, but by y knowledge of the Gospell: If you once entertaine this knowledge of God his worde, then you will doe with it as a cunning workeman in his trade: hee will euer take delight in his worke & occupation, euen so if you had this feeling you woulde delight in prayer, which now is a hell vnto many, then your harts both priuately would bee as studious in meditating goodnesse, as euer they were desirous of worldly pleasure, and woulde publickly breathe after it as the Harte in his chase doeth after the well springes. But oh dearly beloued, this condemneth the worlde of hatred of God, of the pride of themselves, of ignorance in the trueth, of coldnesse in religion, of trusting in the worlde, mispending of time, louing of pleasure, and lacke of deuotion, that they are as hardely drawne to prayer, according to the common Prouerb, as a hare taken with a Tabret. Think you that these persons which absent themselves from publique petitions, and priuate prayers; haue any loue of God in them: nay are not those condemned which are drawne to them against their will, and where shall these cursed companions appeare, which forsake sermons, goe out of Churches, lye idle at home, and are disporting themselves in brauery abroad, when y time of prayer calleth for their presence at home or in the Church, do they not seperate themselves from the faithfull in this life? and therefore they shall bee miserably damned with the Deuill and his angels, & euerlastingly exeluded from Christ and his Saints.

Fourthly by this prayer of these elders wee obserue, that we must especially pray for the multiplying & augmenting of the faithfull, for they pray that Ruth may bee

bee like not to the daughters of Lot, of whom came the cursed Moabites and Ammonites: nor yet to Rebecca, of whome came the vngodly Edomites: nor yet to Keturah, from whome came the godlesse Madianites and Arabians, but to Rahel and Leah which builded the house of Israel, that is, which increased the Lordes people, which multiplyed the heyres of the promised land, and augmented the number of the faithfull. This our sauour commaunded to be done, next to the glorifying of God: for first wee say, hallowed be thy name, and then thy kingdome come, which is, first that the spirit might raign in our harts; & then y^e moe saints may be added to the Church. For we must pray for y^e friends & not for the enemies of Christ. For this cause Paule compareth mariage to y^e coniunction betweene Christ Ephes. 5. 24
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& his Church for as the one ingendreth many saints, so the other must beget many faithfull members: & truely as one pearle is worth ten thousand pebles, so one good child is better to the parents, then many thousands of euill. The vse of this doctrine is, that we should not bee like the Jewes, desirous of many children, because our families should grow great, but like the doves which bring forth few, which might be the children of innocency: the Elephant being the greatest, and yet the meekest beast, conceaureth but once in all her time, whereas the lesser and more hurtfull creatures increase many, yet it is better for the first to haue but one, We are good and hurtles, then for the latter to haue many which are euill and harmefull, euen so beloued it is good to increase doves and not serpentes, Elephantes and not Tygers, and better is one Isaacke the sonne of promise, then a thousand Ismaels the children of bondage: We know the most precions hearbes bring the least fruites, and that is not the best which doth most of all multiply, so the godly like good trees, must rather desire one or two children like themselues, and to bring forth & grow in issue sparingly, by little and little, then sodainly to swell vp like the waues of the sea. We reade that Ismael had twelue sonnes, all princes, but Isaacke his brother had onely twaine, Iacob & Esau, and them he obtrayned by Gen. 25. 16.
21.
S 3 prayer,

prayer, so hardly the godly are borne and conceyued, when with the wicked they come as thicke as the haile-stones in Egypt for the confusion of the fruit of the land. Therefore as the seed is cast in vain vpon the land, which the foules doe presently deuoure, so those children had beene better they had neuer beene borne, whom darke-nes blindeth, ignorance possideeth, mallice ruleth, vn-godlinesse leadeth, & Sathan tormenteth: for the few-est number are the godliest posterity, in whom light shi-neth, knowledge dwelleth, meekenes raigneth, godli-nesse guideth, & Christ eternally bleffeth.

Fiftly by the prayer of these people we note y second blessing of a godly marriage, which is to gather by law- full meanes much wealth: for that which in the English is, *doe worthely in Ephrathah* in the Hebrewe is, *gather wealth in Ephrathah*: For it is more generall in the eng- lish, then in the originall, for to gather wealth by honest meanes is to doe worthely, because it is the blessing of God: Therefore wee will take the surest and the safest interpretation, by y which this collection is confirmed, and their mearing is, that Bohaz which in his marriage respected not riches, should by his godly choise enioy a vertuous wife to bring vp faithfull children, & increase his substance by the blessing of God, that he might ad- nance the honour of their countrey and Cittie. Ney- ther is this vnkowne that after children, the growing in wealth is the next blessing of the Lord, as Abrahams seruant telleth Laban, the Lorde hath blessed my mai- ster exceedingly, and made him very great, for he hath giuen him flockes and hearde, siluer and gold, seruants and maidens, cammels and Asses, all this did the Lord bleffe Abraham with, after his marriage with Sara: A- gaine, the holy Ghost describeth Iob, after his children which were seuen sons & three daughters, he reckoneth his wealth and saith: His possession was seuen thousand cattel, three thousand camels, fise hundred yoke of oxē and fise hundred she asses, with a great houshold. For wealth in marriage, is the best seruant that can be enter- tained, I might speake of many moe, but few perswas- ions will suffice in this point, because wealth was wont

Gen. 24. 35

Iob. 1. 3.

to be the maide, and godlinesse the mistresse : but now riches is become the mistresse, and religion the maide : For wealth, men rise early and goe late to bed, labour diligently, and fare hardely, trauaile earnestly, & sweat painefully, and I can finde no fault but with too much following this wealthy trade : For first of all, I must complaine with Salomon, that there is but one and not a seconde, who hath neyther brother nor sonne, yet there is no end of his labour, neyther is his eye satisfied with riches, for this olde canker infecteth euery age, whereby it is a pleasure to certaine couetous wretches, to toyle their bodies with vntimely labours, to clogge their mindes with golden cares, and to weary their senses in numbring their wealth: & what is the end hereof? surely this the gatherer is like an asse which carrieth the treasure but cannot vse it, being laide on his backe it must bee taken off againe : the heyres like the drones spend all, but gather none, for as they sweat not for it as it was in getting, so they spare not as long as it lasteth, launishing out that in riotous company, which was gathered in couetous incroching. Others, that they may thriue, count all thinges lawfull : for they say God hath giuen the earth to the children of men, therefore they spende the Sabbaothes in buying and selling, in bargayning and labouring: they get by right & wrong, forgery and deceite, play and worke, neyther lands nor cattels come amisse to them : so they may haue them : But we must alway remember, that wee neyther go to the right hande nor to the left, that is, if thou haue many children, thou must vse no vnlawful meanes to keep them: if thou haue none, thou must not hoard vpper thy wealth, as if thou haddest some, but remember the day of aduersity, and deale somewhat for thy present need, and not altogether for thine owne commodity. But you will say, shewe vs some brieue rules, by which wee may practise the truth : by your fauourable audience I will giue you these three rules : the first is in getting, the second in keeping, and the thirde in departing from it.

Eccles. 4.7

Eccles. 6.2

Concerning the first, which is getting of wealth; first

- Gen. 30. 33. our onely care must bee for the blessing of God to encrease vs : We haue an excellent example in Iacob, hauing nothing in the worlde beside his wiues and children, yet woulde receyue no wages of Laban, but promised his seruice for the spotted lambes, choosing rather to depende vpon the blessing of God, then the policy of his owne wit, to testifie his vprightnes in the presence of Laban, & to teach vs all, that thriuing commeth more by \bar{y} fauour of \bar{y} Lord, then the wisdom of the world. For Laban thought he had made a good bargain for himself, \bar{w} in deed proued to his great hinderance, euen so when men thinke they haue compassed the world to increase their profite, sodainely the Lord sendeth a crosse to disapoint their purpose \bar{y} they might know that to be true \bar{w} Moyse saith, that it is the Lorde \bar{w} giueth power to get wealth : against this those offende \bar{w} encrease their wealth, & liue vpon vsury, for they depend not vpon the blessing of God but bind their debtors in bands, win or loose, they will haue both principall & increase. Againe, others are so greedily bent vpon their profits, that their only desire is to wax rich, of wh \bar{o} Paul speaketh They which wil wax rich fall into many temptations, & snares, & many foolish & damnable lustes, \bar{w} drown men in euerlasting destruction: for the loue of money is the root of all euill, which while some desired they erred from the faith, & pearced themselues \bar{w} many sorrowes. This striketh to the earth false measures, naughty wares, breaking of promises, detaining of heirs, rayling of rentes, oppressing the poore, deceitfull bargaines, & vnlawfull trades, for none of these depende vpon the Lord, but giue their soules to the Deuill, for encreasing their wealth. Secondly, you must know how to vse your wealth according to the word of God : \bar{w} is thus, according to the cou \bar{s} el of th \bar{e} Apostle, if thou haue little, be contented, for godlines is great gaine, if a man be contented with that he hath, for we brought nothing
1. Tim. 6. 6. 7. 8 into the worlde, neyther shall wee carry any thing out of the worlde : this is the reason of contentation, but some will say, how much shall wee haue before we be contented, the Apostle aunswereth in the next vers \bar{e} : if

we haue meat & clothing, we are therewall contented. Againe if they be rich, the same Apostle sheweth how they shall beare their wealth in these wordes: Charge them that are rich in this worlde, that they bee not high minded; neyther trust in their vncertaine riches; but in the liuing God, which giueth vs all thinges to enioy abundantly: That they distribute to other, that they be rich in good workes, that they bee willing to giue, and easie to be intreated; Laying vp for themselues a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay holde on eternall life. Out of the which wordes wee must obserue these thinges: First, that riches must not make men proude, for they are the gifte of God, but our rich men scorne and disdaine their **pope** bretheren of Christ, commaunding and oppressing them both by word and deede, in most odious and shamefull manner. Secondly, they must not put any confidence in their wealth, but repose their trust in the liuing God, who gaue it to them, and to whom they shal giue an accompt for vsing & abusing it, for to put trust in their wealth, is to thinke they may doe with it what they please. Thirdly, they must distribute willingly, liberally and dayly, for as they are rich in substance, so they must bee rich in good workes, that is, they must excell other in giuing, as they doe in possession: Fourthly, that those men which do thus bestow their wealth, haue laide the foundation of their saluation, and lay hold on eternall life. This is the way to keepe wealth after the word of God, and who soeuer doth otherwise eyther in marriage or vnmariage, doth hoord vp but rust to torment him, the canker to consume him, the care to molest him, and vengeance against the day of vengeance eternally to condemne him.

Lastly, in departing from his wealth, first, if hee haue wronged any man, hee must follow the example of Zacheus, restore foure fould, and he shall be blamelesse for that, spende liberally vpon his family in good sort, after the counsell of Salomon, for this pinching of seruantes and families sauoureth not of God, nor of religion, nor of humanity, the bruite beastes condemne it,

1. Tim. 6

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Luc. 19, 8.

Prov. 5, 15

16, 1

it, but spend nothing in waste, for thou art but steward of thy goods, now you know a stewarde must giue an accompt to his maister. Finally, that which thou reseruest, giue thy children, as Abraham and all the godly did to their posterity: and whosoever followeth this counsell, shal bee guiltlesse for mispending, cleare from cuill keeping, free from wrong getting, and acquitted from the dreadfull reckoning which all the worlde shall make one day to the Lorde for abusing his benefites.

Now let vs giue thanks to God;

The fifteenth Lecture.

Chap. 4. vers. 12. 13. 14. 15.

- 12 *And that thy house be like the house of Pharez, whome Thamar bare vnto Iudah, of the seede which the Lorde shall giue thee of this young woman.*
- 13 *So Boaz tooke Ruth, and she was his wife, and when he went in vnto her, the Lorde gaue that she conceived and bare a sonne.*
- 14 *And the women said vnto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinseman, (as his name shall be continued in Israel.*
- 15 *And thus shall bring thy life againe, and cherish thine old age, for thy daughter in lawe which loueth thee hath borne him, which is better to thee then seven sonnes.*



WE haue shewed you the last sabbaoth, that this 12. verse is a part of the prayer of the elders and people at the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, for in the first parte they prayed for the fruitfulnessse of the woman, but in this they commend vnto God the blessing for their posterity, and because wee then denided it, wee will
first

first of all handle it, and then proceede to that which followeth.

First therefore out of this second part in their prayer, we gather another duty of the godly in praying for children, which is, to desire in some measure the blessings of this world, eyther riches or honour vpon them: which in this place these Iewes doe vnfaignedly pray for the house, or posterity of Bohaz, when they say, and that thy house may be like the house of Pharez, who had the birrhtight of Iudah, whose posterity was the noblest of all the family, from whome also descended this Bohaz, as appeareth by the ende of this Chapter, which flourishing estate, as it had continued in the progeny of Pharez for six generations, so they wishe it might followe in his posteritie for many more, neyther is this speciall in this place, but also disperfed through all the scripture, for wee knowe what promise the Lord made vnto Abraham Gen. 12.4 that vnto his seede hee woulde giue all the lande of Canaan, as a comfort vnto him, to thinke that his posterity shoulde bee so well provided for, whereby they might not onely bee continued, but richly aduanced as the Lords of the earth. The like was it that hee promised to Dauid, that hee shoulde al- 2.Sam. 7.12 way haue a sonne to sit on his seate, not simply a sonne, but a sonne to sit on his seate, as if the Lord had saide, thou shalt alway haue the kingdome in the possession of thy posterity, and they shall raigne as kinges for euermore. So on the contrary, it is a curse when the name of houses are put out, their memory forgotten, their wealth disperfed, their honour abased, and their children like vagabondes vpon the earth. It was also a speciall promise to the people of the Iewes, that if they obserued the statutes of the Lord, then shoulde they and their seed bee able to lend to other, but they shoulde not neede to borrow of any.

Gen. 12.4

2.Sam. 7.12

Psal. 109.8
9.10

Deu. 28. 13

These things considered by the example of these promises of the Lorde, and the persons of these fathers, wee haue an excellent way described for the main-
tenance

renauce of our possession, in the name of our posterity: which is this, to commend it by prayer to the tuition of the eternall God, for that which he hath promised, may we pray for, the same way, that maketh barren women to become fruitfull, the increase of the earth to multiply, the heauens to giue their raine, Countries to be deliuered from sword, famine, and pestilence, and pulleth downe all the blessings of God vpon vs, is also the appointed meanes for the continuance of worldly families. But how long, how long shall I perswade the worlde before they belieue it? doe they not spende their dayes in worldly deuises, to compasse the earth by multitudes of purchasings, which are alwaies traueilling abroad in restlesse iourneyes by many bargaines to augment their substance, vsing all lawfull and vnlawfull meanes for to increase their wealth, and enlarge their possessions, that their posterity might bee honourable when they are deade, their children aduanced by money not by vertue, maintained by pride not by humility, raigne like kinges in all manner of pleasure vpon the earth, while the fathers are tormented in hell for their wrongfull oppressions; thus men prey on the worlde as the Eagles on the Altars, and the birdes on Abrahams sacrifice, but not to the Lorde, as the young rauens that call vpon him, who being left of their owne parentes, are fedde by the Lorde, that his kindnesse might bee manifested to our children as well as to birdes, and that their welfare dependeth vpon the blessing of God, not the benefite of elders, the fauour of our maker, not the couetousnesse of our fathers. Against these it is that the Prophet cryeth and curseth, because they ioyne house to house land to land, field to field, inheritance to inheritance, that themselues might raigne alone vpon the earth, this is the care of them, which are sodainely from the dust to the chayre of wealth aduanced, from slavery to honour, from beggery to riches, that they might (as the Prophet sayth) builde fayre houses, encroch greater compasse of landes, that their names might bee famous vpon the earth: But who is hee that

maketh

sa. 5. 89

sa. 49. 12.

maketh any ordinary and dayly prayer vnto the Lorde, that his substance might bee by his blessing increased, with his fauour preserued, and to his glory bestowed. Nay, nay, if none had no more wealth then that which they had gotten by prayer, the glorious shewes would in little space growe as bare as the trees in the winter, when they haue neyther fruite nor leaues to coner them. This I speake not to the discredit of any wealthy persons, but shew them the way to attayne to the end of their desire, the continuance of their posterity in godlines and wealth, which is by prayer. Foras Christ prayed for Peter that his faith should nor faile him, so parents must pray for their posterity, that their names may not decay in them. If any thinke when their barnes are enlarged, their corne gathered, they filled, health enioyed, wealth increased, and rest obtayned that eyther soules or children shall haue the greater rest, like that foole in the Gospell, their marks are much amisse, for wealth and issue are lost both in an houre, looke vppon the example of Iob, the death of his children, and decay of his wealth. Againe, none must bee hereby emboldened, to present their prayers before the face of the Almighty, for the maintenaunce of their children in worldly vanity, to make that the onely ende of all their desire, which is, to be more carefull for the shooe then the foote, for the rayment then the body, and for the body then the soule: but this must bee their direction as the Lorde commaunded the Jewes, if they kept his statutes then shouldc their oxen bee strong to labour, their sheepe bring forth thousandes and ten thousandes in their streetes, their daughters like the polished corners of the temple, and their sonnes as the fruitfull garners, which neuer are empty. For vngodly Haman was hanged, though hee were the prince of the Princes, but godly Morderay was aduaunced, which was as poore as the basest: Shebna was depriued of his office, because he was wicked, when godly Eliakim was promoted to his place, euen so it is not honour, but the feare of God that bringeth and sustayneth honour, that you must pray for

Luc. 22. 32.

Luc. 12. 16.
17. 18.

Deu. 28. 12.

Psal. 144. 12.

13. 14.

Esth. 7. 10.

Esa. 22. 20.

for your children, Kings for vngodlines were deprived of their seates and thrones of maiesty wherunto they were born, much more wil the Lord execute his iudgements of pouerty and slauery vpon those that would be aduanced and yet are wicked; for Salomon saith, that the prosperity of fools slay them, and the crowne doth not endure from generation to generation, yet the feare of the Lord abideth for euer.

2. Secondly, by this verse we may note, when they expressly make mention of Thamar the mother of Pharez, and with the posterity of Bohaz to be like his, the great blessing of God vpon that incestuous birth for we know the history, how that Thamar was y daughter

Gen 38.18. in law of Iudah, the wife and widdow of his eldest son,

29. dissembling her selfe to be a whore, by her apparell & place, had the company of her father in law, by whom shee was conceyued of two sonnes, the elder was this Pharez, and the younger Serach: yet we see how y Lord doth magnifie this Pharez with a glorious and godly posterity. By the which hee teacheth vs these two profitable lessons, that the sinnes of the faithfull are forgien, though they bee neuer so great. Wee see this Iudah an excellent man, yet ouercome in this action, had not any such plague inflicted on him, as Reuben his eldest brother, or Simeon & Leui, but he which couered and omitted that sin of Abraham with Hagar, of Iacob with Bilhah and Zilpah, of this Iudah with Thamar. Let w his own daughters, and such like, wil also forgieue all the defaults of the godly vnto the end of the world. By the which we gather exceeding comfort when wee come to this perswasion, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Iesus Christ, that the gates of hell shall not preuaile against the mercies of the Lord, that y victory of our faith shall conquere the world, when Noah shall be cleansed from his drunkennes, Moses & Aaron from their doubting, Miriam from her murmuring, David from his murder, Peter from his denyall of Christ, and all because the Lord will couer the sins of his Saints, bee they neuer so great, when hee punisheth the faultes of many thousand wicked persons with eternall damnation,

tion, although they haue not sinned with the like transgression. Secondly, by this we learne, that the Lord doth not punish the childre for y^e perents faults, if they commit not the like themselues, for this Pharez begotten in incest, was blessed by the Lord, not onely with temporal glory in himseife & his issue, but also with this, that he was made one of the fathers of Christ. And this teacheth vs, that this vpbraiding of men for their birth, be they base borne or free borne, is no fruit of the word of God, but the mallice of the deuill, which first deceyued the parents, and nowe woulde discredite the child. Let it not therefore beloued be any speech in our mouthes, to shoot at them whom the Lord hath wounded by nature, any thought of our hearts to enuy their welfare, were their parentage neuer so base, but pray for them, that though they proceede not of a sanctified birth, yet they may growe vp to a sanctified and holy life, to make a godly & a blessed end. And finally, let vs be encouraged vnto religion by the fauour of God, which dealeth thus mercifully with his Saints, neuer suffering any thing to be laid to the charge of his chosen, stopping the mouth of the deuill himseife, y^e he neuer rise in iudgement against y^e faithfull, or bring any little sin of theirs into the remembrance of God, but washing them all in the lauer of regeneration, y^e bloud of his sonne, & wil giue them white robes clesed fro al filthines, y^e they may be chaste virgins for y^e Lords seruice, and feed at his owne table for euermore, this consideration made Dauid to cry out, & say, oh whē shal I come and appeare before the presence of God? it made Simeon to say, now Lord let thy seruant depart in peace, it caused Paule to vtter these wordes, I desire to be dissolued and to be with Christ, for blessed are the people that are in such a case, yea blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. Thus much for this verse. Now let vs goe to the verse following.

In these three verses following, the holy Ghost declareth the blessing of God vpon this mariage of Boaz and Ruth. The wordes containe in them two partes, the first part is of Boaz ver. 13. the second is of the women that were present at the trauaile of Ruth. The first
part

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part sheweth, how Boaz taking Ruth, and vsing her as his wife, had the blessing of God, in conceiuing and bearing him a sonne: the other parte of the women, is their reioysing with Naomi for this fruitfulness of Ruth; it comprehendeth two partes, the first, their thankesgiuing to God, vers. 14. in these words, Blessed be God, secondly, the matter of their thankesgiuing in the wordes following, first, for Bohaz his sake, in that God had left him to be Naomies kinselman, secondly, because this childe of Ruthes her louing daughter in law, should renew her yeares, and cherish her old age: of these parts let vs briefly speake in order.

So Boaz tooke] After the solemnity of this marriage, in the presence of the people, and their praier ended which they powred forth in the behalfe of both these parties and their posterity, Boaz proceedeth to the end of this action, and taketh Ruth to his house to be his wife, as a duety of a kinde and a godly husbnde. For all this while wee must imagine that Ruth was absent from the place of this communication, and according to the counsaile of her mother, sat wayting at home, for some prosperous newes, and praying no doubt, for a ioyfull successe of this desired marriage, out of this we gather.

I First, the duety of all godly husbandes, which is to take their wiues and dwell with them, as this Bohaz doth Ruth, for it is no doubt, but that hee presently went to the house of her mother, and thence tooke her, bringing her to his owne house, that there they might liue and loue together. This phrase of scripture wee may finde vsed in many places, as in the historie of Izaak, how he tooke Ribkah his wife, and brought her into the tent of Sarai his mother, and was comforted after his mothers death, where the holy Ghost doeth not onely declare the kindnesse of Izaak, but also the commodity of dwelling with a wife, for the presence of Ribkah caused her husbnde to forget the death of his mother, as if he had said, the preience of a wife is greater then the comfort of a mother. For this cause Peter exhortheth that husbandes should dwell with their

wiues

Cap. 3. 18.

Gen. 24. 67.
Rebecca,

Rebecca.

1. Pet. 3. 7.

wiues, like men of vnderstanding, giuing honour to their wiues as to weaker vessels, because they are the heyres of the same grace, and that their prayers be not hindred; as if he had sayd, they must dwell together, and they must pray together, for as Christ is alway present with his Church, so husbandes must keepe the companies of their wiues. This point being euident both by reason and religion, it condemneth the wandring abroad of many idle husbandes, some which are neuer satisfied with riches, by marketes and merchandise, trauiailing in the world, deprive their wiues of their due beneuolence, others for their pleasure walke from Countrey to Countrey, spending their dayes in pleasant disport among carnal and suspitious companions, leaue wife and familie, to the sea of this world, like children in a Shippe, without guide or marriner; many are present, but to the discommoditie and discomfort of their poore wiues and children, oh how doe any of these persons take their wiues with godly mindes eyther to dwell or pray together, How can the vine prosper when the roote is vncovered, and how can Gen. 20. 16 women be comforted, when their couer is taken from them, I meane their husbandes, as Abimilech the king of Gerar told vnto Sara, is not the body dead without a head, yea if it be but a minute of an hower, doe not then our wandring youthes murder the bodie of their owne family, being absent about vnecessary busines, sometime for the space of many monethes; Is not the body maymed if it want but the least member, yea, but a finger, how is then those householdes wounded, where the chiefest parts eyther husbandes or wiues be wanting or wandering abroad, and finally what is this but to diuorce themselves for a season without any lawfull cause, to put asunder them whome the Lord hath ioyned together, to break the fellowshippe of holy wedlock, to despise the society of godly marriage; to lay open themselves to the temptations of the Devils, and to thrust both bodyes and soules into daunger of damnation? This I speake not, as if all absence from eyther party (which consent for a time about

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necessary

necessary busines) were vnterlie vnlawfull: for so Iacob, Moses, Aaron, Dauid and the Apostles, should bee faulty; but I speake against this willfull departing of one from the other, without eyther consent of man or wife, conscience of the law of God, or regard to their owne personnes, for the company of these twaine is greater then parentes or children, for which the Apostle sayth, that if one bee a beleeuing person, and the other an infidel, yet they must not depart if they bee willing to dwell with them, and hee giueth no liberty for breaking their company, except it bee to pray the more seruently, and wisheth also that if they doe soe, yet it must be but for a season, that sathan tempt them not, so great regard must be had of the fellowshippe in marriage, that the zeale of prayer, the worshippe of God, the loue of our owne parentes, the increase of wealth, and the pleasures of the world, must not separate, without the voyce of both parties, and yet the time must be but short for the auoyding the temptation of Sathan, and the danger of their owne damnation.

Secondly by this wee may gather who is the author and sender of children, which is the Lord; for this scripture sayth that *the Lord gaue her to conceyue*, for as Paule saith of the corne that is cast vpon the earth, that it increaseth neither by the planter nor yet the waterer, but by the Lorde, so must wee say by the seed of mankinde, that it lyeth neyther in the husbände nor in the wife, but in the blessing of God: for which cause, when Rahell said to her husbände Iacob, giue me children or else I die; he answered her in anger, am I in Gods steede, that kept thee frō the fruite of thy womb? as if he had said, it is God that sendeth issue, and not man: therefore Dauid saith, that children are the possession of the Lorde, and the fruite of the wombe is his reward. By the which wee are taught many excellent & worthy lessons: first, that seeing they come from the author of euery good gift, we haue a ready way where to aske them, when we want them, for as when we want wisdom, the Apostle saith, wee must aske wisdom at

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Gen. 25. 2
Rebecca.

at the hand of God, so when we want childrē; we must aske children at the hande of God. When Ribkah was barren, by her husbandes praier she was made fruitfull, so barren women by their husbands prayers haue beene made the mothers of many children. Annah obayne by her prayer at the temple not onely Samuell, but also three other sonnes and two daughters. Oh let vs not be vexed then for many children, but let euery one aske confidently by the will of God, and they shall receyue (if it so please him) plentifully to their owne desire: Secondly, seeing children come of the Lorde, wee are taught to vse them as the blessinges of God, and as the childe by nature should first know his mother that bare him, so we by instruction should first teach our children the feare of God that gaue them; it is farre better for many children that they had neuer beene borne, except their parentes had more knowledge to till their mindes with the immortall seede of God his holy worde, then to looke vpon the Sun as the condemned person which commeth out of prison, and so goeth to execution, in like maner childrē without the knowledge of y^e feare of God, do come from the wombe of their mothers, which is their prison, to the fire of hell which is y^e place of execution. Oh my beloued, looke ypō your tender childrē, and so often as you see them, you behold the blessinges of God vpon you, make much of their soules by praying for their saluation: you haue brought them into y^e world, leaue thē not to the deuill. Thirdly, seeing children are the gift of God, those which haue childrē haue greater accompt to make, then those which haue none, for of him to whom much is giuē shal much be required, & they to whom the Lord hath giuen children and seruants, lands & cattels, shall answere for enery one of these to y^e Lord: therefore parents must finish their reckning which they must giue to the Lord, and let not one farthing of their debt be omitted, for he wil plague them as wel for not doing their duties to their owne children, as gracelesse children for contemning of God. And this one consideration should mitigate y^e desire of posterity, because if they abuse them, their own damnation shal be

1 Sam. 2. 2

the greater, if they bee unruly, they bring nothing but sorrow to their parents, if they be godly, the world will hate them, and if they bee wicked the deuill will haue them. Were it not a pittifull sight to see the father burned, for murthering his sonne, howe much more grieuous is it to see both father and sonne, mother and daughter, husbände and wife, mayster and seruant, mistresse and maides, pastors and people, to goe all to damnation together, because the former did not guide the later, oh would God that the desire to escape this iudgement, would sinke into the hartes of all, that wee might euery one addiect our liues to holines, our minds to knowledge, our bodies to obedience, our heartes to vnderstanding, our children to instruction, our seruants to religion, and all our soules to saluation.

3. Thirdely, by this wee gather, that it is a greater blessing to bee the mother of a sonne, then the parent of a daughter, if it so please God to sende them: for in this place the holy Ghost saith, that *the Lorde gaue her and she conceived and brought forth a sonne*, as if hee had said, the Lord gaue her her owne desire, and the best issue, which was a manchild: for this cause our Savi-

John 16.20 our faith, that a woman forgetteth her paines in trauaile so soone as a manchild is borne into the worlde.
 Gen. 18.10. Therefore is it that the Lorde promised Abraham a
 Luc. 1.13. sonne, that hee gaue Zacharie and Elizabeth a sonne, and finally therefore the Lorde calleth vs all his sonnes, as a father reioyceth more for a sonne, so the Lord reioyceth in the saluation of all the faithfull. By this wee are taught to magnifie the name of the Almighty, for euery one his beuefites in their degree, and if wee want any, by prayer to craue it at the hands of God, alwaies remembring that we leaue the ende of our desires to be agreeable to his will. And here we see the prayer of the people in the former verse to bee in part fulfilled, when the Lord did so soone blesse this good olde man, by giuing him a sonne: for it is no doubt but the holy Ghost doeth so presently after their prayer adde their conception and his birth, that hee might stirre vs vp with greater zeale, to desire the prayers of the faithfull, which

which are alwayes auaileable in the presence of y^e Lord. Come therefore my bretheren, and let vs fulfill the desire of the Lord, and accompt more of the petitions of the godly, then all the possessions of the wealthie: by prayer the earth is made fruitfull, and the heauens drop downe aboundance; by prayer famine is remoued, wars appeased, the wrath of God pacified, and the health of the body recouered, by prayer wisdom is increased, faith confirmed, remission of sinnes obtained, the barren woman made a fruitfull mother of many children, the dayes of life lengthened, peace of countries and consciences prolonged, & the kingdome of heauen eternally inherited. Therefore those which cannot pray; abhorre the presence of God, are weary of our assemblies, forsake sermons and congregations, depart from the fellowship of the faithfull, and haue their sinnes sealed vp, their liues accursed, and their soules euerlastingly condemned.

And the women] Nowe wee must proceede to the second part of this scripture, wherein is declared what issue and effect this wrought in other, for so soone as the child was borne, it did not onely bring comfort to the parents, but also ioy and gladnes to the godly citizens of Bethlehem: among whom these women are reported by the holy Ghost (which no doubt, were present at the deliuey of Ruth) to magnifie the name of God, for this so greata benefite bestowed vpon the olde woman: although her children were dead, yet her name might bee recouered by her louing daughter in lawe. By this wee first of all obserue the duety of all the faithfull, which is to reioyce with them that reioyce, and to weepe with them that weepe, for as these godly Iewish women reioyce with Naomi for the fruitfulness of Ruth, so must wee euery one bee like affected for the blessings that are powred vpon our brethren. The like vnto this, may we reade of the neighbours and kindred of Elizabeth, hearing of the wonderfull mercy of God vnto her, they reioyced with her. This teacheth vs the same duety, that the ioy of our brethren should be our reioysing, and their sorrow our lamentation, for there

I
Rom. 12. 1

Luc. 1. 58.

is no fellowshippe, but there must bee a feeling of the same ioyes or miseries, not onely in publike affaires which respect their whole common wealth, but also in priuate busines the benefite of euery particular person. The head is sore when the stomacke is sicke, the hande is griened, when the foot is maymed, and euery part of the body being in prosperity, reioyceth together. For this cause Paule biddeth vs to endure all thinges with the same minde, meaning that euery mans minde shoulde bee like his brothers cyther in sorrowe or reioysing. But is this the fellowshippe that raigneth among vs in these dayes? or rather are wee not merriest when our neighbours are tormented, and doeth it not grieue vs to see others to prosper beside vs: yes surely, for there is no more hearty and vnfayned friendshippe among men in our dayes, then is betweene the hauke and the birde, when cyther of them is taken, the other reioyceth. This is the cause that men are no more accompted after wealth fayleth, friendship withdraweth when they stand in most neede, and least pittie is in the greatest extremity. Euery tree is greene in the spring, euery birde will sing in sommer, and euery false hearted Christian, will faune vppon their brethren in prosperitie, but bee ashamed of their want in aduersitie: yea, there neuer wanteth priuie repiners and grudgers, at the wealth and welfare of euery one: for some say it is too much if their neighbours corne increase, others say it is too little, when they are vexed and troubled by losse of their goodes, and this maketh many medlers in other mens matters, many backbiters for other mens welfare, many enuy that any shoulde haue their shares as good as themselves, like him in the Gospell, whose eye was euill because the Lordes hande was good, and as all the waues of the sea doe beate vppon the shoare, so all the braines of the worlde doe breathe against the prosperous.

2.

Secondly, the manner of their reioycing must bee considered, which the holy Ghost hath set downe in these words, *Blessed be she Lorde: wherein they testi-*
fis

The Reward of Religion. 279

fy perfect ioy both to the Lorde by prayſing him and
 giuing thanks; and alſo to Naomi, vnto whome
 nothing could bee more acceptable, then to heare the
 name of God to be bleſſed for her ſake. To bleſſe in
 the ſcripture whenſoeuer it is referred to God, ſigni-
 fieth to prayſe or to giue thanks: as when Zacharie
 ſaith, Bleſſed bee the Lorde God of Iſrael, for he hath
 viſited and redeemed his people; that is, Prayſed bee Luc. I. 68
 the Lorde God of Iſrael. Likewise the Apoſtle Paule
 ſaith, Bleſſed bee God the father of our Lorde Ieſus
 Chriſt, the father of mercies, and the God of all con-
 ſolation, that is, prayſed bee God. And in another
 place hee ſaith, If thou bleſſe with the ſpirite, howe
 ſhall hee that occupieth the roome of the vnlearned 2. Cor. I. 3
 ſay Amen to thy thankſgiuing, that is, if thou giue
 thanks with the ſpirite. In this place it is of the firſt
 ſence, as if theſe women had ſaide, We praife thee
 O God, that thou haſt looked on the miſerie of Naomi,
 and haſt reſerued her a kinſeman, by whome the
 name of the deade might bee raiſed vpon the inhe-
 ritage, & his owne honour continued in Gods people.
 By the which we are taught what manner of ioy the
 faithfull are to haue for their bretheren, namely, ſuch
 as may redounde to the praife of God, according to
 the ſaying of the Apoſtle, that hee which reioyceth, 1. Cor. I. 13
 muſt reioyce in the Lorde: for as bodily exerciſe pro-
 fiteth little, ſo carnall ioy profiteth leſſe, ſuch as is
 the framing of vayne ſonges giuing ouer our la-
 bours, and to reioyce in paſtimes, and ſuch as is v-
 ſed in ringing of belles, and the like ſort, being one-
 ly for man and not for God. Therefore heere wee
 haue an excellent manner of reioycing, when God
 is glorified by our mirth. Thus we reade Moyses and Exod. 15
 Aaron with their ſiſter Miriam did, after they came
 out of Egypt. Thus did Deborah and Barach af- Jud. 5.
 ter the victory againſt Siſera. Thus did the women 1 Sam. 18.
 after the victory of Saule and Daud, when they
 came from the ſlaughter of the Philiftims. Thus did
 Zachary when his tongue was reſtored vnto him.
 Thus did the children of Ieruſalem cry when Chriſt Luc. I. 68.
came

ue. 19. 38. came riding vppon the asse. Thus doe the faithfull re-
 ceue. 19. 1. ioyce after the destruction of Rome and Antichrist,

2. singing, Prayd be God, saluation and honour and glo-
3. ry and power to our Lord God: And the Lord crieth
 out of heauen ynto vs: Praise the Lord all ye his ser-
 uantes, and whosoever feare him both smalle and great.
 Therefore beloued, seeing it becommeth the iust to bee
 thankfull, let vs praise the Lord both euening and mor-
 ning, and let vs not see a sparrow light on the ground,
 without some praise to God, by whose prouidence all
 thinges are governed, by whose wil all thinges are orde-
 red, for whose glory are all thinges appointed; that we
 shoulde euermore giue thanks to him that sitteth on
 the highest heauens, and ruleth the mightiest princes, ap-
 pointing the measure for the sea, and calling the whole
 world to iudgement, in whose presence is light and life
 for euermore.

Thirdly, the matter of their thankesgiuing, must bee
 considered, for they praise God; because he had kept a
 kinsman alieue for Naomie, whose name should bee con-
 tinued in the people of God; so that in plaine wordes
 they commend the kindnesse of God, because he had so
 provided for this godly Naomi, as shee might bee com-
 forted by his meanes, and his name continued by her
 daughter, and all three eased by this one childe. By the
 which we are taught these two profitable lessons: first,
 that we must magnifie God for the life of our friendes,
 so doe these Iewes for the life of Bohaz, by whome
 the Lord brought such great comfort to both these desti-
 tute and desolate widdowes, for as wee are sorry for
 their death, when it is too late, so must wee bee thank-
 full for their life, when yet they are with vs: the
 sonne for the life of his father, and the father for the
 sonne, the wife for her husbände, and the husbände for
 his wife, the seruant for his maister, the subiectes for
 their prince, the people for their teachers, and the daugh-
 ters for their mothers. There are fewe of these but they
 bringe much benefit vnto vs, and no smal comforte doth
 arise by their presence, which we shall better perceiue
 when we wante them, then now we enioy them, & for
 these

these the Apostle also willett vs to pray, and one cause of these two miracles vpon Lazarus and Dercas, was that their life might be prolonged with the Church of God, and more kindenes shewed to their godly friends: Secondly, by this all those that are able to bestowe any kindenesse vpon other, are taught their duties to their owne kindred, that especially they bee carefull for the reliefe of their pouerty, the maintaynance of their dignitie, the preservation of their honestie, and the nourishing of their owne flesh, for vnto that end hath y Lord encreased their substance, continued their name, prolonged their day and aduanced their seates, that they may be more able to do for their poore brethren which are commended to them by the Lord, committed by the worlde, and compelled by nature, which are bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, that they might bee maintained as your owne selues: When Dauid was made king he aduanced his sisters sons & his kinsmen: when Saule was king he aduanced Abner and other his frendes, and we know that many of Christes Apostles were his kinsmen: vnto the which end Paule exhorteth, that poore widdowes be prouided for by theyr frendes, that the church bee not charged with them. This condemneth the forgetfulnes of many in our age, which being in wealth, will scant acknowledge their poore kindred, wherby they shew themselves like vnnatural beasts, as if the Lord were not able to bring them downe to the footstool in the place of the other that they might cry & not bee heard.

1. Tim. 2. 1

Iob. 11.

Act. 9.

1. Tim. 5. 8

Psal. 1 19.

164-

And this (shall) In this verse is the second part of their ioy, in so much as now Ruth hath brought forth a sonne it is better to Naomie then seuen sonnes, for seuen is taken for many, & not for any definit number, as when Dauid saith, that he prayseth God seuen times a day y is many times euery day. Also they protest in this verse, that it reioyseth them to see Naomi so comforted with the birth of this childe; as that now her life is restored, whereas before it was dying like an old stubble, which had no greene twigges vpon it, but now this one being shoot forth, shee reuiuet and gathereth comfort

in

in her old yeares.

By this wee see the duety of parentes, which is to reioyce when their children encrease, and they see their childrens children: these Iewish women no doubt but spake by the experience of their owne dayes, that as a woman, lying at the point of death, being recouered, is ioyfull & thankfull for the same: euen so old persons haue neweliues in their childrens children: for which cause they ought to be thankfull to the Lorde: for the comfort of their children, who may likewise reioyce whē they see their parents delight in their offspring. Thus no doubt but Abraham did when he saw Esau and Iacob his sonne Isaacks children, being borne about fifteene yeares before his death: this did Iacob when hee

Gen. 48. 10. sawe Manasseh and Ephraim his sonne Iosephs

11. children, kissing and imbracing them, and saying, I had not thought to see thy face any more, but the Lord hath let me see thy seede and posterity, as if he had said, I thanke God for seeing thee, but I reioyce that I see thy children also. And truely, this I am sure will godly aged parentes do, who haue these for their examples, of faith & conuersation that they might with more thankfulness praise the Lorde who letteth them see their childrens children, & with greater comfort reioyce in them, that were borne of their owne bodies, but with greatest ioy and most willing mindes commend their withered age, and all worne yeares to the hands of the Lord; who hath multiplyed their seede in this life, and will glorifie themselues in the life to come:

Now let vs giue praise
to God.

The end of the fifteenth
Lecture.

The sixteenth Lecture.

Chap. 4, ver. 16. 17.

- 16 *And Naomi tooke the child and laid it in her lappe, & became nurse vnto it.*
 17 *And the women her neighbours gaue it a name, saying, there is a child borne to Naomi, and called the name thereof Obed; the same was the father of Ishai the father of David.*



IN the former wordes wee hearde the last Sabboath, the prayer and thanksgiving of the people, or the women of Bethlechem, for the birth of this son of Bohaz, and the comfort of Naomi: but now in these words the holy ghost proceedeth to the education and circumcision of the child in these two verses: wherein the holy Ghost deliuereth vnto vs these thinges: first that Naomi tooke the care of the education of this childe verse 16. Secondly, the naming of the child by the neighbours, the women of Bethlechem, which they gaue vnto it by occasion of their owne wordes, when they said in the 15. verse, that he should cherish her, namely Naomi, and therefore they call him Hobed, which signifieth seruing: thereby signifying, that he should serue for the comfort of Naomi: of these parts let vs briefly speak in order, as the spirite of God shall giue vtterance and the time permit.

And Naomi tooke the child] After the mercy of God in the blessing of Ruth with a sonne, who was the only heyre vnto the house of Elimelech, the husbände of Naomie, which brought no smal ioy to the old woman, to see her name and the name of her family reuiued in the birth of this sonne, when it was vterly decayed in the sight of the worlde, for she was old and a stranger in Moab and had no hope of any more children, neyther
 was

was it likely that her daughters in lawe (their husbands being deade) would returne from their countrey and kindred vnto a strange people, with whome they had smal acquaintance, euen none at all, Naomi their mother in law accepted, so that the hope of their posterity being buried in Moab, the life of her family must needs decay in Bethlechem. Therefore her returne to her owne countrey was a fauour of God vnto her, and raising vp the minde of Ruth to be pertaker of her iourney, and companion in her trauaile, was an especiall comfort to her wearied age, but prouiding so honourable a marriage, for her, and making her so fruitfull a wife in short time was the life of Naomies death the renewing of her family, the restoring of her hope, and the resurrection of her dead sonnes, for the continuance of their names in the gate of their places: & therefore she like a ioyfull and thankful grandmother for discharge of her conscience, loue of the infant, & ease of her daughter, becommeth a fellow nurse for y better education of the child, out of the which we note.

First, that as we haue heard how the miseries of Naomi were cast vpon her, together, so now the mercies of God are multiplied in the same in greater measure: For then her woe was begunne by the death of her husbande, continued through her long dwelling with the wicked Moabites, & ripened through the death of her two sonnes: So now it falleth againe as the darkenesse departeth at the dawning of the day, and giueth place to the light of the Sunne, so her miseries are repealed, first with the louing and constant fellowshippe of her daughter in lawe Ruth, who was as a carefull husband to her in labouring for her liuing, and a blessed childe to increase her posterity: Againe, she now was in quiet dwelling among the people of God, enioying the company of the faithfull, and the fellowshippe of her friendes: moreouer her posterity is restored in the fruitfulness of Ruth, and she, euen she her selfe liueth to see the day when al this falleth vpon her, to the endles comfort of her withered age, and present praise of the name of God. Thus we see it is a righteous thing with God,

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first to wound and then to heale, first to strike and then to stroke: first to cast downe, and then to lift vp: for this is certainly the cuppe of all the faithfull, that they must tast of many bitter afflictions, before they come to the possession of eternall blessednesse, yea of worldly miserie, they must sustaine some crosse, before they can be thankfull enough for that which they quietly inioy. So wee reade of Iob, how in one day hee had his corne burnt, his cattell stolne, and his children slaine: this was bitter vnto him for many daies, yet in the ende he was restored two for one, and sawe more sonnes and more beautifull daughters, yea his childrens children to his vnspeakeable comfort. The like may be said of innocent Ioseph, hee was rebuked by his father, hated & sold by his brethren, imprisoned by his maister, forgotten by Pharaohes butler, all these were no small discouragements to so young a man, yet in the ende hee was aduanced to the highest steppes of honour as a recompence for all the tribulations he had endured. I may also adde this of Dauid being persecuted by Saule, betrayed by the inhabitantes of Keilah, driuen to the Philistines his sworne enemies, to craue a dwelling of them, seeing many martired for his sake, in the end had the possession of the kingdome of Iudah, and after of Israel, which was the gift of the Lorde, the rewarde of his afflictions and his religion. By the which wee may see the hope of the godly: not that which they feele, but that which they may lawfully look for, the ease of their paines, & remedy of their griefe, the comfort of their troubles, and the end of their miserie to be speedy redresse, if with patience they looke and wait for the pleasure of the Lord: Therefore the godly say with Dauid, if ten thousande compasse them rounde about, they will not be affraide, for the Lord is the eye witnesse of all their miseries: the hot furnace of Babilon feareth them not: the Lions den cannot driue them to dishonour God, if flames of fire consume their bodies to ashes, the dartes of Sathan pierce their soules to the quicke, the reproches of the worlde destroy their names, and the enemies of God spoyle their substance, yet they are not left destitute, for
their

Iob. 1. 14.
15. 16 17. &
42. 12. 13.

Gen. 37. 10
11.

Heb. 6. 19:

Psal. 13. 1.
& 43. 7.

their faith ouercommeth the worlde, their patience, all their afflictions, and their loue of God their desire of earthly prosperitie. All which caused the Apostle to say, that hope was the anchor of the soule, meaning that as the anchor stayeth the shippe in the midst of all the waues, though they be neuer so great and huge: in like manner the hope of the godly keepeth them in the barke of Christes Church; among the thousandes of worldly tribulations: For Dauid faith, great are the troubles of the righteous: for the Lorde deliuereth out of all, as if hee had saide, the righteous and godly are afflicted to this ende, that the Lorde might shew his power in their deliuerance: And in another place hee complayning of his sufferinges, and the sorrowe of his soule: yet concludeth with this figuratiue speech: Why art thou so sadde O my soule? and why art thou cast downe within mee? trust still in the Lorde, for by him I haue deliuerance against all my paines and grieffe. Euen so doe I say to all my poore brethren in the worlde, why are you so sad? if you want maintenance, the earth is the Lords: If frendshippe, the harts of kinges are in his handes, as the riuers of waters: if libertie, hee can breake asunder the iron gates, and deliuer the prisoners from their tormentors: if health, in his presence there is ioy and life for euermore: if children, hee maketh the barren woman to bring forth many children: if apparell, hee clothed the Lillies aboue the royaltie of Salomon: if meate, hee can multiply the leaste morselles into the greatest measures: and finally, if defence, hee giueth his royall Angelles charge ouer the poorest of the godly, that the violence of princes, and the force of the Deuill himselfe shall neuer goe beyond the decree & purpose of the Lorde? Therefore if gripes of grieffe, and tormentes of sorrowe doe lodge with vs all the night, yet ioy shall come in the morning, when the poore shall be restored, the sicke recouered, the sorrowfull comforted, the faithfull rewarded, and the wicked eternally plagued.

Secondly,

Secondly, by this verse wee also gather a worthy example of a godly grandmother, which for the ease of her daughter, the loue of the infant, and the thankfulness shee owed to God, shee became a fellow nurse vnto this young sonne of Bohaz: for although the wordes of the scripture bee these, that *shee became nurse vnto the child?* yet the meaning is not, that shee tooke it from the mother, but that her tender care ouer it was such, that during the weaknesse of Ruth, and absence of his mother, shee laid it in her lappe, and was as carefull for it, as any nurse that was hyred to that duety: for Naomi could not bee a nurse in these olde dayes of hers, without husband or milke: which we know is the chiefeft nourishment for younge children, and therefore a nurse in this place, is taken for one that had a great care to procure the welfare and ease of the child.

By the which wee note another duety of aged parentes, which liue to see theyr childrens children, namely that they bee as nurses vnto them, to bee as carefull for them as theyr owne, for therefore the Lord suffereth them to see the increase of their seede, that they might couer and nourish it in their owne presence. For this cause wee may read, that the sonnes of Manasses, and his sonnes sonnes were brought vp on the knees of Ioseph theyr great grandfather, for this laying in the lappe or on the knee, signifieth a most tender care ouer the infantes, that they be alwayes not onely in the presence, but also in the handes of theyr grande parentes, as Rahell when shee gaue her maide Bilha vnto Iacob, and saide, that shee might bringe foorth vppon her knees, that is, shee would bee as carefull in the nourishment of them, as if they were her owne. Then by this they are taught theyr dueties, vppon whome the Lorde hath vouchsafed to bestowe this blessing, that they may see theyr childrens children; namely, that it is required at their hands, that they provide for their educatiō, good instruction & bringing vp for they may say as Labā said to his daughters children, *they are*

Gen. 30. 23

Gen. 30. 3.

are their owne; and therefore the care of the bringing vp dependeth vpon them: wee see the little twiggcs at the toppe to be nourished as well by the roote, as the bowes that grow out of the body of the tree, euer so grand-parentes prouide, as well for the mainenance of their childrens issue, as for their owne: so that in all kindnesse they must be intreated, in all wisdome bee iustructed, with all carefulnes be corrected, and with all religion be gouerned, for alassee if the twiggcs faile, there can be no fruit, and if your seed bee corrupt, there will come but a hard haruest, so if your childrens children be not ouerscene by you that are parentes and rulers of both, your name will decay, your family dye & your posterity bee vitterly forgotten.

Thirdly, in this place wee may profitably enquire, about the nursing of children, seeing Naomie is said to be the nurse of this childe of Ruth: Whether it bee lawfull at all to put out children to nurse from their owne mother; or whether the care of parentes be not to bring vp their children in their infancy, in their own persons or presence; or els commit the tuition of the to other. Vnto the first question I aunswere, that euery woman being in health of body and minde, is bound by the worde of God to nurse her owne children, and the reasons for the confirmation hercof are these, first because the Lord in the creation of their bodies, hath giuen to euery woman breastes which are the meanes whereby children sucke their nourishment: and therefore eyther the Lord created their breastes in vaine, or els they sinne, if they set them not to worke: if any say, that the Lorde did giue the breastes not for any necessity that they are bound so to doe, but that they might bee furnished with the meanes if they had the pleasure to doe it, to whom I answer by the like example, the Lord hath giuen to euery one handes to worke, eyes to see, eares to heare and tongues to speake, is it in the choise of men, to cut off their handes, to pull out their eyes, to stop vppc their eares and to keepe their tongues in silence all their life, & neuer vse them, as many women doe to their naturall breastes? I thinke not, for if they should, they must
deface

deface the workmanship of God; dismember their own bodies, and murther the parts of mankind: Therefore as the Lorde hath giuen to euery one handes, euery one must worke, or els hee is accursed, vnlesse they will be idols: of whom Dauid speaketh, they haue hands & handle not, eyes and see not, eares and heare not, feete and walke not, noses and smell not, and such are women that haue plentifull breastes, and yet giue no suck. Secondly, the example of all the godly confirme it, as wee see in Sarah, which nursed her sonne Isaacke in the mother of Moyse, which was carefull that her childe shoulde bee nursed by no other then herselfe: in Ma. noahs wife the mother of Sampson: so did Bathshebah the mother of king Salamon, being a queene in Israel the wife of king Dauid; yet she thought it her duty to take her owne child and nurse it: I will speake nothing of Hannah, of Elizabeth the wife of Zacharie and mother of Iohn Baptist, of the virgin Mary which gaue sucke to the Lord of glorie, Iesus Christ her sauour and of the mother of Dauid, all which are as patternes of natural affection, for all the godly women in the world to imitate, and what blessing was powred vpon their children, who knoweth not. Therefore eyther women must follow their godly examples, or shew some character of their libertie aboue these, or proclaime open disobedience to God, and the godly, because they swarue from his holy worde, and their most pure and worthy examples: but it is better to obey God then men, and to be ruled by the troublesomeliues of the faithful, then by the peaceable, and pleasant deuises of all the gentlewomen in the world whatsoeuer.

Thirdely, it is a signe of the wante of loue and naturall affection in the parentes (as the Apostle speaketh) when the mothers doe not bestowe the labour to giue their owne children the naturall milke: for if they had the same naturall feeling of their duties to their children, they could not (hauing no occasion) commit the nourishing of their children to straungers, who can neuer bee so inwardly kinde to the infantes, as the mothers eyther are or ought to bee: therefore al-

v

though

Gen. 21.7
Exod. 2. 8.9
Iud. 13. 4.
24
Cant. 3. 1.
1. Sam. 1. 23
Luc. 1. 80.
Luc. 2. 7
Psal. 22. 9

Rom. 1. 30

though they pretende a kinde of sorrowe for their childrens absence or departing from them, yet it is like the lamentation of Esau, which wept when hee could not get the blessing, whereas he sold it before, and was the onely cause of his owne reprobation: so women weepe at the departure of their children: whereas it lyeth in their owne power to keepe them in their owne possession, and more thankefull would the child be in his heart to his mother; if she had bestowed the labour to nurse him,

Fourthly, it is not so naturall for the childe to bee nursed where hee was not borne, for the same body whereof hee had his being, is most fitte for his feeding, as wee see a plant doeth best prosper when it is grafted where it sprunge vp first of all, then being remoued into another ground, so the bodies of children doe growe more freely, and like more cheeresfully with their owne mothers milke, then with all the worlde beside, and the auncientest Phisitians say, that it were also better for the mothers if they gaue themselues to this labour, therefore they doe but hinder their owne infantes borne of their owne bodies, and as it were keepe them from their naturall welfare, when they giue them to bee made another nature, which is by their nursing and feeding: These causes and more also being duely and carefully considered, you shall finde it a greater sinne, to give your children to other to bee nursed, then heretofore you conceyued of it, so that you must for this one thing, condemne the vse of your breastes, (which were the creation of God, and the practise of the auncient godly women, which were euery way as noble as any aliue) forsake the tender loue that a mother ought to beare to her innocent babe, bring your childrens bodies to a seconde, yea a contrary disposition and complexion, and stoppe vp the plentifull conduites of streaming milke in your breastes, to the losse and hinderaunce of your owne health: Therefore if any haue any power to performe this naturall duetic to their children, let them practise it: for all the carnall reasons of the worlde must not preuaile

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preuaile against the least collection of the word of God. But some will say, admit that any through negligence doe put their children to bee nursed of other, doeth the fault onely rest in the parents, and nothing in the nurse: to whome I aunswere, if it be vnlawfull for the parents to giue, it is also vnlawfull for the nurse to take: so that whatsoeuer is said against the one, may also bee brought against the other. But in causes of weaknesse in the woman, daunger to the child, or sicknesse in either of both; it is not onely a duety of necessity, but of conscience, to nourish and cherish the children of others.

Therefore although the mothers had the nursing of their children, yet there were others also like peti-nurses, which had some especiall care in the keeping of the children, as we may read of the nurse of Rebecca, which was the true vse of nurses for the ease of the mother to take the custody of the children in all thinges, saue onely in giuing them sucke, and therefore is it, that wee may reade in auncient histories, that one childe had many nurses, that is, many to attend the welfare and nourishment of the infant: of this sort was Naomi at this present, who tooke vpon her some care of this sonne of Bohaz, that they both might be more diligent for the education thereof. Now for the other question, whether it bee lawfull for the parentes during all the time of the infancy thereof, if the mother be not able to giue it sucke, to commit their children to other to bee brought vp: I aunswere, that euery man and woman are bounde to see their childrens first instruction, that is, if it bee possible to haue them in their keeping at their first entrance into knowledge, and when they are first of all capable of any goodnesse. So wee reade Isaacke remayned with his father Abraham in the time of infancy, when God commanded Ismael to bee cast out: so Iacob kept little Beniamin with him: neither wold he depart from him vnto any, til Simeon was bound in Egypt: so we read of the king Ioash, whom his aunt Iehoshebah hid from the rage of Athaliah, who was

Gen. 24. 59
Gen. 21. 12
13.
& 42. 4.
2. King. 11
2. 3

brought vp in the house of her husbände Iehoiadah, where shee was most worthely instructed in the feare of the Lord; so we reade our sauour Christ kept till he was twelue yeares olde, with his mother and supposed father, and after he had bene at Ierusalem, hee was obedient to them till the yeare of his preaching, which was when hee came to the age of thirtie yeares. Therefore the conclusion of all this is, that neyther the nursing nor instruction of our children must be deferred to other, at the least so as we seeme not but to bee many wayes as carefull for them, as if they were in our presence, to bee euermore mindfull for the wealth of their bodies, and health of their soules.

Fourthly, and lastly, by these wordes wee may gather how great and excellent is this worke, the bringing vp of children, for which the Lorde hath expressed in his worde, that it is required that many should be ap-
plied, for in this place we see Naomi and Ruth bestow their labours for the education of this new borne babe: and we haue heard that Rebecca had a nurse that came with her from her fathers house to the lande where Abraham dwelt, which signifieth vnto vs, that neyther their infancie can be vntedde, nor their youth vnrul-
ed; for this is not so base a worke as many thinke it, that one is enough, if not too much to take the care of their children; for wee knowe wee are easily drawne to many inconueniences, neyther can the parentes bee present to foresee all, but if any bee helpers in this busines, their care is much eased; the children lesse endan-
gered, their welfare better provided, and the parents due-
rie better discharged. Euery flocke hath a keeper be-
side the owner, euery garden hath a dresser, beside the
mayster: and if it be possible, let euery childe haue an
ouerseer beside the parentes, for alas the silly infant is
soone cast into the fire, falleth into the water, ouer-
turned with the wind, and euery beast is ready to work
his destruction: all which may bee wisely preuented,
though not with the presence, yet with the counsell and
care of the parentes, by providing such carefull persons
to be their guides, as may also defend them when they
are

are absent.

And the women her neighbours. In this verse is the second parte which concerneth the naming of the childe, where the holy Ghost doeth declare vnto vs the persons that named the childe to be the women of Bethlehem, the neighbours of Naomi, which no doubt was then giuen to the childe, at the eyght day which was the circumcision, according as wee see in the history of Iohn Baptist, after the law of the Lorde, calling him by the name of Obed, which signifieth seruing, or a seruant, shewing how he should serue for the comfort of Naomi, Boaz and his mother.

By this wee first of all note and obserue, that it is the duty of the faithfull to bee helpers one to another in the seruice of God, and admonition of their duties: for here the childe being circumcised, was accompanied with many godly women, whose deuise they vsed, and followed in the naming of the childe. Indeepe we may often read that the parents gaue names to their children, sometimes the fathers, sometimes the mothers, & sometimes the Lorde himselfe, as in many persons wee may perceiue, but wee haue read that the people were so kinde to help in this matter, and to further the duty of any godly minded, (on ly this place excepted) so that these women are a most godly example for all the faithfull to behold; howe they must further, and helpe one another in the cause of religion. For the naming of children in olde time was very excellent, when they were carefull by their earthly and outwarde titles to admonish them of their inwarde and heavenly duties. And that which these did in this one, must wee doe also in all other duties, to draw more and more to the loue of religion: as wee reade the Apostles did one another, when they came to the first knowledge of the Messiaht: for as a little quen seasoneth a whole lump, euen so a few godly personnes may draw a great many to religion. Therefore this one duty of all other belongeth to the flocke of Christ, that they helpe one another in the workes of Christianity. When the ruler of the Temple his daughter was sicke, for the little childe hee

went to our sauiour, by which meanes he recouereth her life; this was the dutie of a godly father when the sicke man of the palsie could not come to Christ, foure of his neighbours brought him to his presence, & the Lorde forgaue him: this was charity and the duty of neighbours: When Dorcas was dead, the women sent for Peter, who being come, she was restored to life. And thus parents must helpe forward their children, neighbours, their fellows, and euery man one another: if they want knowledge, let vs teach them knowledge out of the pure word of God: if they cannot pray, let vs pray with them, and for them, to the almighty God; if they trauaile to heare the word, let vs trauaile with them to encourage their carefulnes: but of this matter we haue often spoken. Now let vs glie praise to God.

The end of the sixteenth
Lecture.

The seuenteenth Lecture.

Chap. 4. ver. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22.

28 These are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begate Chetzon.

19 Chetzon begate Ram: Ram begate Hamminadab:
20 Hamminadab begate Naschon. Naschon begate Salmā.
21 Salman begate Bohaz: Bohaz begate Hobed.
22 Hobed begate Ishai: Ishai begate David.



Owe by the mercifull kindnes of the Lord we are come to the last part of this historie, & the conclusion of this Chapter, where the holy Ghost describeth vnto vs, the kindred of Boaz, euen all the generations, frō Pharez to king David: shewing vnto vs the increase of these Iewes, from their dwelling in the land of Caanan, before

before they went into Egypt vntill the time that Dauid was annointed and appointed king in Israel: wee may for the easier handling of these wordes, deuide them into these two parts: The first is, those persons that were the progenitours, auncestors or fathers of Bohaz, in the ver. 18. 19. & 20 which are set downe to be Pharez the first, Chetzron the second, Ram the third, Hamminadab the fourth, Naschon the fifth, and Salman the sixth, who was the immediate and naturall father of Bohaz. The seconde parte is the progeny, offspring and children of Bohaz, which succeeded him: first Hobed: Secondly, Ishai, and thirdely Dauid the king. Of these parts and persons, let vs briefly speake, so much as serueth for the exposition of the scripture, and the satisfiing of the tyme, through the assistance and helpe of the spirite of God.

These are the generations] Now that the holy Ghost had declared vnto vs this history of Ruth, though briefly and in a few wordes, yet in ample and large circumstances, for the vaderstanding of his minde: at the ende hereof hee annexeth the kindred of the personnes, whome it chiefly concerneth, that hee might shew vnto vs, that they were no meane or base persons for whome this history was compiled, but such as descended of the noblest family in all y world; who were the appointed fathers of many kinges, and that which is most of all, the persons, of whose seede our sauiour Iesus Christ tooke the beginning and substance of his humane nature. And therefore in this place wee must declare the causes that moued the holy Ghost to be so carefull in y rehearsing of the genealogies of the fathers; for we must not imagine, that he must reth not the names of those auncient persons, to worke any wonder in our mindes at the recitall of them, or that the scripture could haue bene perfecte without the seuerall generations therein described: but wee must knowe that there were dyuers necessary and waightie causes, by the iudgement of the auncientest and most approued writers, which moued the spirite of God to intersert these genealogies,

First therefore according to the condition of all man-
 kinde, there is equally described, the generations both
 of the godly and vngodly in the scriptures, for this
 cause to shewe the multiplication of mankinde: of
 this sort are the generations of Adam, Seth and Cain
 reported by Moyses, that hearing the number of man-
 kinde so quickly multiplied, wee might the more
 earnestly giue praise vnto God: Againe the genea-
 logies of the sonnes of Noah are described vnto vs, to
 shewe the replenshing of the earth, the destruction
 of countries, and the restoring of the worlde: But to
 come neerer vnto the matter wee must take this for a
 generall rule that the genealogies of the wicked are re-
 ported in the scripture for to shewe the blessing and
 loue of God vppon the godly and righteous men: as
 for example, the Lorde reckoneth vp the posteritie of
 Ismael, the sonne of the bonde woman, shewing
 vs how great a people hee became, and how many
 Dukes or princes proceeded out of his loynes; to
 shewe vnto vs the promise and couenant which hee
 made to his father Abraham, that hee shoulde bee a
 great people, was fulfilled, and this serued to magni-
 fy and exalt the name of godly Abraham: Wee reade
 that the Lorde bestoweth a great genealogie vppon
 wicked Esau or Edom, numbring or reckoning vp
 his sonnes, and his sonnes sonnes, his kingdome and
 the kinges of his seede that reigned after him, for
 no other ende but to reporte and manifest the bles-
 sing vppon godly Isaacke and Rebecca his parentes,
 according to the oracle that hee gaue to his mother,
 when she demaunded and enquired the cause of the
 strugling or struiuing in her wombe. The like may be
 saide of godlesse Cham for Noah his fathers sake, of
 the sonnes of Iacob for Israels sake, of Ephraim and
 Manasses for Iosephes sake. By the which we gather
 and note this excellent doctrine, that if the wicked
 haue any good, it is for the sake of their godly and
 righteous parentes or friends: Wee see they shoulde
 not haue so much as a name in the booke of God,
 were it not for the cause of the righteous and godly

wee

wee reade that when the Sodomites were overcome in warre, their people lead captiues, and their goods spoyled by the company of Cedonahomet, then for Lots sake, the Lorde stirred vp Abraham, and armed him with men and courage, who wonne the victorie, recovered the spoyle, brought backe the prisoners y restored their goods, and gaue them all liberty, for godly Lots sake, who was shortly after despised by them, but they for their wickednesse were burned in brimstone, when righteous Lot was deliuered from them. If Ioseph had not beene, they had had no corne in Egypt. If Moyse had not beene, the Lorde had often destroyed the Israelites while they wandered and wauieted in the wilderness. For Iacobs sake the Lorde increased the flockes of Laban; For Iosephs sake hee blessed the affaires of Potiphar; For Pauls sake hee saued all them that suffered shipwracke at Myletum. Euen so also hee blessed the house of Obed-edom, because the arke was kept therein, and at this day giueth greatest peace to these countries, where his Gospel is promoted. Let the Atheistes thinke if there were none that feared God, they shoulde quickly bee condemned; let the drunkardes know, if there were not some temperate persons, their bodies shoulde bee quickly consumed; let the couctous wretches assure themselves, if there were not some liberrall men, their owne goodes woulde turne to their death, let the profaners of Sabbathes remember, that if there were not some sanctifiers thereof, their delightfull vanities woulde long agoe haue wrought their sorrowfull destinies, let the contentious plaintifes bee certified, that if there were not some peaceable Christians among them, their wealth had long agoe beene wasted for the prayers of the faithfull are like the walled Citties against the rage of the enemies, to keepe the vengeance of the Lorde from falling vpon vs: as the bloud of the Lambe spotted vppon the postes of the Israelites houses caused the Angell to passe by them, when all the first borne in Egypt were slayne, euen so the bloud of the Lambe of God, which is sheade in the heartes of the godly, maketh his messengers of death to departe from

from our countrey and kingdome. If there were not a remnant among vs. that are in league with the Lord that dayly are the hearers of his word, the beseechers for his mercy, and as the ambassadours of peace to dissuade him from punishing our contempt of his word with condemnation, our abuse of his creatures into pining famine, our wantonnesse in peace into lamentable warres, our riotous liues into forraine captiuitie, and our pampered bodies to the slaughter of the sword. You, euen you, that blaspheme the name of God, if there were not a number that reprove your abominations, the heauens woulde raigne downe stones to reuenge your accursed tongues: you, euen you, that spende the Sabbaths in dauncing and playing, if there were not a company that refraine your pollutions, you had beene cut off from your pleasure with some fearefull death, before you had passed thus many dayes of securitie: you, euen you, that thinke the preaching of the Gospell like the voyce of one that singeth, wherunto you owe no more obedience, then care service: if there were not a remnant that hearde the worde of power, which they beleue is able to saue their soules, you had beene many yeares since, suffering the rewarde of such impious infidelity. What stayeth the Lord from coming to iudgement; but the faithfull and elect company: what keepeth you in your possessions, reuenues, and landes, but the poore Saintes of God, who are hardely admitted to the tables of your seruantes, who prayeth for the increase of your wealth, the prosperitie of your liues, the feeding of your bodies, and the continuance of your honour, but these despised persons who haue entred a couenaunt for your dayly welfare with the king of heauen and of earth. They are the flocke for whose sake you haue the wooll to cloath you, and your milke to feed you; they are the bees, for whose sake you enjoy the hony for your delight; and the hony combe for the pleasure of your meate; they are the birdes, which haue builded vp your pallaces and houses of rest, for the defence of your

your

your weakenesse; they are the oxen that bring your corne to your barnes, and your store into your garners; they are the beastes, that beare you out of the dangers in safety, and deliver your liues from trouble. Finally, there is not a vsurer, but he hath his money for their sake; there is not a Gentleman, but hee hath his landes for their sake: there is not a Prince but hee hath his Crowne for their sake; there is not a rich man, but hee hath his wealth for their sake; there is not a Minister but he preacheth for their sake; and there shoulde bee no peace, prosperitie or plenty, if it were not for them. For the Angelles are their seruantes, the earth is their mayntenaunce, and heauen is their inheritance. Bee assured therefore beloved, if righteous Lot got out of Sodome, or godly Noah into his Arke, then fire will fall from heauen, and the dephtes will open their fountaynes of water to burne and destroy the worlde: euen so if the Lord take away the righteous from among vs, then, euen then presently shall follow the destruction of our countrey, the consuming of our kingdome, the confusion of the worlde, and the condemning of the reprobate, and therefore let vs make much of them, in whom we see any hope of religion, for they are the right heyres of the world, and you that haue their landes, are but ouerseers of their fathers testaments, and therefore shall giue an accompt of your possessions to them when they come to age, and be answerable for euery farthing which you spent not vpon them.

Secondly, another cause of the genealogies, or recitall of generations in the Scriptures, is for the Chronologies or noting of seuerall times, wherein euery worthy thing was done, and howe the worlde grewe in yeares, and the mercy of God in sparing the wicked liues of, so many godlesse men, and choosing but one family among all the world, with whome hee woulde establish his couenant: for this cause in the genealogie of Adam, wee reade how long hee and euery one of his children liued, to shewe howe long the

200 The Reward of Religion.

Gen. 5. the Lorde suffered the wicked before hee brought the
flood, and in what age of the worlde the same over-
flowed, which by the genealogies there set downe, ap-
pearth to bee in the year of the worlde one thousande
sixe hundred fiftie and sixe, when Noah was sixe hun-
dred yeares olde. Againe, wee reade in the genealogie
Gen. 11. of Sem, by the supputation of the yeares therein men-
tioned, howe long after the floode, Abraham was cal-
led from his countrey, and receyued the covenant of
promise, concerning the incarnation of Iesus Christ,
and the saluation of the worlde. The same may be said
of the often repetition of the age of Abraham, as at
Gen. 12. 3 his calling, at the time of his circumcision, at the birth
Gen. 17. 24 of Izaacke, and at his death, which giueth a great light
to euery part of the scripture, for thereby the occasions
of many excellent histories are taken, the darkest pla-
ces are opened, the faithfull are confirmed, and the
Church of God instructed of her age, and her continu-
ance, of her members, and her condition, which is
subject to many and often chaunges. Sometimes her
glorie is greater, as in the first age, sometimes lesser, as
in Abrahams time, sometime afflicted, as the estate of
Jacob in Egypte, and all his children restifieth: some-
times without any knowne and publique ministerie,
or offices, as till Aarons dayes, sometime without any
civill or politike gouvernement, as in the time of all
the Patriarkes, sometime without peace in persecution,
as in the time of the Iudges, wherein these personnes
heere named, liued, and sometime in most flourishing
estate, as vnder Dauid, Salomon, Asa, Iosiah, and such
like. By the which we gather, that it neuer standeth in
one stay, but eyther increaseth or decreaseth, ebbeth
or floweth, riseth or falleth, waxeth or wayneth:
therefore heerein lyeth the great comforte of the godly
euen in these troublesome dayes (but yet the best that
euer are to bee looked for in this earth) wherein they
see the auncient to departe, and newe men in their
roome, one generation commeth, and another goeth,
iniquitie aduanced, coldnesse in religion embraced,
disimulation and hypocrisie maintained, warres and
persecu-

persecution threatened to the Gospell, schismes defended, errorrs inuented, the worlde blinded, the truth declined, godlinesse defaced, and the Church of God disquieted, with a thousande greater calamities, this all the fathers suffered before vs, and this wee their children must also abide, onely herein let vs reioyce, that wee shall bee accounted worthy to suffer for Christ, and that our names are written in the kingdome of heauen.

Thirdely and lastly, the especiall cause of this genealogie, and of all the fathers and children of Abraham in one kindred, was for to shewe the naturall descent of Christ from Adam, and so forth vnto the virgine Mary: for seeing he was to be incarnated, it behoued that his parentage shoulde bee described from the beginning of the worlde: for this cause Luke the Euangelist, gathered together the seuerall descriptions of all the genealogies pertayning to Christ, throughout all the whole scripture, as a necessary grounde of the Gospell, to declare the kindred of our Sauour from the beginning of the worlde, whereof these persons mentioned in this place are a part, from whence he tooketh them into his number.

Luc. 3. 23

Now least any man shoulde thinke, that the birth of Christ shoulde bee obscure, and the taking vppon him the flesh of mankinde, shoulde bee incertaine, as well to conuince all errorrs that arose about his humanitie, as to testifie the nobilitie of his birth, and worthinesse of his parentage, the persons of whome he descended, are in many bookes of the scripture seuerally named, and not without great commendation. For this family of Christ had many and speciall blessings, which were the armes of the same, by which it was distinguished from all other. In Adam it had this promise, that the seede of the woman shoulde breake the serpents heade; meaning, that Christ which should bee borne of a woman, shoulde overcome the force of the deuill. In Noah it had this promise, that the covenant of God shoulde bee established with him and his seede, meaning that his promise which hee had made

Gen. 3. 15

Gen. 9. 9

vnto

vnto Adam, shoulde be perfourmed in his posteritie, which was for the comming of Christ. This promise was renewe d vnto Abraham, vnto Isaacke, and vnto Iacob; and most plainly vnto Iudah, the third sonne of Iacob, who was the father and grandfather of this Pharez, that the Tribe shall not depart from Iudah, nor the lawginer from betweene his secte, vntill Shiloh come, and the people shall be gathered vnto him: and againe vnto Dauid he swore, that the fruite of his bodie shoulde sit vpon his Throne, both which promises or prophesies respect the comming and the raigne of Christ. By this then wee first of all gather the scope of the whole scripture, namely, that aboue all other it respecteth Iesus Christ the Sonne of God, and Sauour of the world, the Prince of peace, the mighty King, and the great Counsellour. For this cause, hee himselfe speaketh to the Iewes, Search the scriptures, for in them you thinke to haue eternall life, and they are they that testifie of mee. Again, Iohn speaketh in the ende of his Gospell, that the Scripture was written that wee might beleue in Christ. And we reade that Apollos did mightely confounde the Iewes, prouing by the scriptures that Iesus was Christ. But most euident and plaine is that, of the Disciples going to Emaus, and Iesus overtaking them by the way, it is saide, that hee began at Moyses and all the prophets, shewing them, that Christ out so to suffer, and that redemption and remission of sinnes, might bee preached in his name to all the worlde. By the which it is most easie to bee gathered, and doeth necessarily followe, that the summe, drift, and scope of the Scripture dependeth vpon Christ. First, because all the godly that are named therein, were eyther his Fathers according to the flesh, or else the singuler types prefiguring his perton, such was Melchizedecke, Ioseph, Moyses, all the Iudges, Samuell, and the Prophetes, which although they were not of his naturall linage, (Melchisedeck excepted) yet they did most liuely represent him, Moyses and the Iudges

In this that as they deliuered the people from earthly captiuitie, so should hee redeeme them from euerlasting calamitie. Samuell and the Prophetes in this, that as they instructed the Jewes in the law of the Lord, which was giuen by Moyses, so Christ shoulde put his lawe in the inwarde partes of the Church, and teach them the Gospell of trueth, their redemption wrought by himselfe, the lawe of righteousness, the wordes of eternall life. Aaron and his fellowes in this, that as they sacrificed for the sinnes of the people with bullockes & beastes, and sprinkled the bloude with hyssop for their outwarde cleansing, so Christ sacrificeth his owne body, and cleanseth from sinne, through the sprinkling of his owne bloude. Dauid and the Kinges in this, that as they ruled the people by their temporall lawes conquering their enemies, and giuing them rest and worldly honour, so Christ doeth raigne with the spirituall lawe of his worde, triumphing ouer hell, death, and sathan, leading captiuitie captiue, ascending vp on high, receyuing giftes for men, deliuering his Church from their aduersarie the Deuill, bestowing vpon them spirituall peace and liberty, giuing them the honours of his Ministerie, Worde, and Sacramentes in this life present, and Crownes of glorie in the life to come. Thus if wee looke vpon the iudges, they shewe vs our redemption. If wee looke vpon the Kinges, they shewe vs our saluation. If wee looke vpon the Prophetes, they shewe vs our instruction. If we looke vpon the Priestles, they shew vs our reconciliation, and if we looke vpon the very names of the fathers of Christ which are described in the olde Testament, they teach vs that our names are also described in heauen, and this is the profite wee reape by the generation or genealogie of the faithfull, to confirme vnto vs the true humanity of our Sauour.

So that heerein most liuely appeareth the dignitie of the Scriptures, and the maiesty of Christ, one mutually looking on another, as the Sunne doeth
the

the starres, and the starres the sunne, for as the excellencie of the sunne appeareth by the glorie of the stars, to whom it giueth light, so the maiestie of Christ is manifest by the scriptures, to whome hee giueth credit: On the other side, as the glorie of the starres is magnified because it is the light of the sunne, so the credit of the scriptures is exalted, because they concerne the Son of God. If the doings of earthly men be but painted in some pamphlets, tragedies, or bookes of Chronicles, we accompt them famous, because their actions are commended in print, what shall we then say of the Sonne of God, whose workes excell the worthiest enterprises of all the worlde together, and are recorded by the holy Ghost the eternall God of truth, throughout all the sacred bookes of his eternall worde, farre aboue the credit of worldly commendations; is not his maiestie incomparable? Do we buy the bookes of earthly mens deuises, to reade the fained and doubtfull aduentures of Princes long since in their graues, and shal we suffer this booke of the heavenly stratagenis of our Sauour lie a sleepe in the shops? Compare their worthinesse together, you shal find the difference as great, as is between the light of the sunne, and a little rotten wood glistering in the darke. They ouercame some worldly Princes, but he ouercame y^e Prince of the whole world: they through a multitude of earthly souldiers, but hee through himselfe alone an infinite number of infernall powers: they inuented politrique lawes for their peaceable gouernement, but hee giueth spirituall preceptes, and ruleth by them the hearts of men himselfe: they had the heads of many noble persons vncouered at their presence, but he hath the tongues and knees of all them in heauen, in earth, & vnder the earth, bowing vnto him, yea the angels do him reuerence, for he is their heade: they prepared names of shippes to cut the seas, but hee could command the waters to beare him vp when he walked vpon them: they had their glory in gold, silver, precious stones, and soft apparell, but he being on earth, had his countenance like the brightnes of the sunne, & his garments as white as the light; they could digge in the earth to
finde

finde treasures for their maintenance; but hee commanded the fishes of the sea to render him his want: they were able vpon infinite charges, to keepe great families: but he without any charge fed fise thousand men, besides women & children with a few barly loaves and two fishes, and caused much more to be taken vp, then at the first was deuided among them: finally they were able to destroy the bodies of men, but he is able to destroy both body and soule, they shewed themselves in outwarde glorie, but he shall shew himselfe in flaming fire, to render vengeance to all them that haue not obeyed his Gospell: Therefore here must wee learne the maiestie of Christ euen in the Scriptures, who was promised to these fathers, appeared in their flesh, satisfied for our sinnes, to whome all the Scriptures giue witnesse, that he shall be the iudge of Princes, and subiectes liuing and dead. Vnto whom wee must giue reuerence, as to his Maiestie appertayneth, for euen now he beholdeth with what feare we heare his word, with what loue wee receyue it, with what hunger we desire it, and with what conscience we will practise it. Oh come let vs kisse the Sonne least he bee angry, let vs wash his feete with the teares of our eyes, and wipe them with the heares of our head. Let vs sue to him, for hee is the Iudge we are the rebels, hee the Sauour, and wee the slaues. Against him onely haue wee sinned by contemning his Maiestie, prophaning his Sabbaothes, blaspheming his honour, disobeying his Gospell, and treading the pardon of our soules vnder the feete of our pleasures: therefore while we haue time, let vs loue his truth, receyue his Gospell, belieue his word, sanctifie his Sabbaothes, magnifie his name, reuerence his Ministers and repent vs of our sinnes.

Pharez begate Chetzeron] Now after the causes of the Genealogies described and the vse of them, gathered out of the worde of God and godly writers, wee must proceede to the speciall persons here mentioned, for whose sake the former hath beene spoken; wee shewed you in the beginning that these generations were some of them before Bohaz, and some after him, as his children,

dren, and this we must put you againe in mind of, that
 here is handled the Genealogie of Christ. In the which
 this seemeth doubtfull that he beginneth with Pharez,
 what shoulde moue him therevnto, seeing (as already
 wee shewed you) that this Pharez was an incestuous
 birth: and therefore to common reason, it seemeth
 much more commendable that hee should haue bene
 ytterly blot out of the note of these fathers, or else the
 Genealogie should haue bene farther repeated as from
 Abraham to Noah, that so the consideration of his
 birth might haue bene hindered, through the compa-
 nie of other godly Fathers. Vnto which I briefly an-
 swere, that for this cause he beginneth at Pharez, for
 the better vnderstanding of the prayers of the Elders, in
 the 12. verse, which desired that the house of Bohaz
 might bee like the house of Pharez, whome Thamar
 bare vnto Iudah, wherefore at the ende of this Histo-
 ric the author annexeth the description of the house of
 Pharez and of Bohaz, for whome they praied, vnto
 the thirde generation. So that in those dayes, most com-
 mendable was the posteritie of Pharez, for they were y
 chiefe of the tribe of Iudah, because this Pharez was by
 nature the heire of the birth-right of Iudah, because hee
 was the Son of Thamar, the widdow of Iudah his el-
 dest son. Againe, the scripture is not wont to couer the
 faults of the dearest children of God, neyther doth the
 holy Ghost euer conceale the sinnes of the godly. It
 telleth vs of the drunkennesse of Noah, the incest of
 Lot, the vnlawfull oath that Ioseph swore to his bre-
 thren, (by the life of Pharaos,) the adulterie of David,
 the distrust of king Asa, the fellowshippe that good
 king Iehosaphat had with wicked Ahab, and Peters de-
 niall. At all these the spirit of God neuer standeth, but
 indisteth them of their sinnes, though hee giue them
 their pardon by Christ. But wee must knowe farther
 that the spirit of God so ruled the pen-writers of the
 Scriptures, that he suffered them not to omit the grie-
 uous sinnes of themselues their fathers and children: as
 for ex mple, Leui was the great graundfather of Moy-
 ses, which was the first writer of the Scripture, yet hee

setteth downe the curse that the Lorde pronounced by Exod. 62
 Iacob against him for the slaughter of the Sichemites,
 Likewise it is held of euery one that Job was the wri- Gen. 49. 7
 ter of his owne historie, yet how doth he lay open his
 owne corruptions, cursing his birth, accusing God of Iob. 4
 iniustice, and desiring to plead with him. Moreover,
 Samuel wrote his owne Historie, especially the greatest
 parte of the first booke, yet he layeth out the corrupti-
 ons of his sonnes in the gouernement of the people and
 how wicked they were, for whose sake the people were
 driuen to desire a King, the like may be said of many
 other, whose cursed sinnes are by themselues detected,
 being not ashamed to confesse them, as they were not
 to commit them, but thus the godly are their owne
 iudges to condemne their owne sinnes, for they know
 if they condemne themselues, they shall not bee con-
 demned of God. They saye with the prodigall Sonne
 that they haue sinned against heauen & against earth,
 and are no more worthy to be called the sonnes of God;
 they say with Paule, that they are the greatest of all sin-
 ners, and therefore haue receyued the greater mercies;
 they say with the man in the Gospell, I am not wor-
 thy that thou shouldest come into my house, and eue-
 more they lay the worst side of their garmentes out-
 ward, that they might be more vile in their owne eyes,
 more fearefull to sinne, more louing to God his mer-
 cies, more humble in the worlde, and more hunger for
 righteousness. Cast away therefore if you be the chil-
 dren of God, this shame to acknowledge the infirmi-
 ties wherewithall you are infected, for hee that confes-
 seth not his sinnes, euen to his brethren, can neuer con-
 fesse the mercies of God to himselfe. He that commen-
 deth a Phisitian, telleth what dangerous sicknesse he
 deliuered him out, and hee that will commend Christ
 the Phisitian of our soules, must tell what sinnes his
 soule was sicke of, and how his Sauour hath deliue-
 red him; but yet alway remember that no man is bound
 vpon necessitie to declare his particular sinnes, except
 when his conscience is grieved for them, that he may
 receyue comfort, or when he must satisfie the injuries

he hath done to his neighbours. But we must learne not once to despise any penitent sinners; but rather embrace them or lay them in our owne bosomes, they are the sheep which wandered, but now is found; the groate which was lost, but now is recouered, and the branches which were deade, and now are greene, for the Angels reioyce for them; Christ dyed for them, heauen is prepared for them, and we must pray for them. We haue heard already that this Pharez was the incestuous Son of Iudah: now if any aske why the Lord would take any part of such vngodly beginnings, I aunswere with

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Paule, that Christ came to saue sinners, that is, he was incarnated of incestuous progenitors, to shew vnto vs, that he could saue such of adulterous birthes, to shew vnto vs, that he could saue the children of adulterie, of Gentiles such as Ruth, Rahab and Bathshebah was, & he might shew vnto vs, he was the appointed Sauour of the Gentiles, because he vouchsafed to take his nature from them: for thus it becommeth him to fulfil all righteousness, to destroy the gates of hell, to deliuer his members from the thraldome of Satan, to gather together in one, from the East, and West, North and South, all the children of Abraham, to enioy the presence of his Maiestie, the inheritance of his kingdom, and the end of their faith, the saluation of their soules.

Pharez begate Hezron] Now wee will briefly giue you the exposition of the names & so make an end of this historie. Pharez or rather Peretz in Hebrue signifieth a diuision, and the occasion of this name was, because of the two twinnes in the wombe of Thamar, he first of all brake forth, and therefore they called him a diuision, from the time of his birth, hee was borne in the lande of Canaan: Hezron or Chetatron, which was also borne in the lande of Canaan, and the Sonne of Peretz, who was borne about the time, that the Israelites went into Egypt, and signifieth in our English tongue, the arrow of ioy; for till the Israelites went into Egypt, they endured a great famine, which Ezechiel calleth the arrow of famine, and when they

Gen. 38. 29.

Gen. 46. 12.

were

were deliuered from this famine, by going into Egypt Ezech. 5. 6.
 for corne; this child being then borne, he was called the
 arrow of ioy, as the famine is called the arrow of sor-
 row, as a remembrance of the mercie of God to them,
 in giuing them breade. Ram was the Sonne of Chert-
 ron, and was borne in Egypt, about the time of Iacobs
 death, when the children of Israel, began to be hated of
 the Egyptians: and therefore they called him Ram:
 which signifieth in our English tongue, cast downe, or
 cast off, because they then began to bee afflicted, and
 saw (no doubt) great miserie like to fall vpon them, and
 they should bee cast downe so soone as eyther the king
 or Ioseph shoulde be dead. Haminadab the Sonne of
 Ram, was also borne in Egypt, about the time of Io-
 sephes death, when he told the Israelites, that the Lord
 would visite them, and deliuer them from the Egip-
 tians, and it signifieth in our English tongue a people
 that would be free, being compounded of two words,
 wherein the Israelites testifie the hope of their deliue-
 rance, that although they were now in thraldome, yet
 they shoulde bee in freedome againe. Nahashon or
 Nachschon; the sonne of Haminadab; was also borne
 in Egypte a little before the departure of the Israelites,
 when they cried grieuoussly to the Lorde for their af-
 fliction which they endured in Egypt vnder the Tax-
 maysters, and it signifieth a crying or complayning,
 thereby noting in the name of the childe that hee was
 borne in affliction, which might put him in minde of
 his fathers miserie, this man when the children of Is-
 rael were gone out of Egypt, and pitched their tentes in Gen. 50. 26.
 the wilderneffe of Sinai; was by election or appoint- Num. 1. 1
 ment of God, made the Prince, of the whole Tribe. Sal- 8. 7.
 mon or Shalmon the sonne of Nachschon, was borne
 after the Israelites were departed from Egypt, while
 they wandred in the desert and were deliuered from
 the Amalekites and other their enemies, and his name
 signifieth peaceable, because they liued then peaceably,
 being freed from the Egyptians and other calamities,
 this man married with the victualer Rachab of Ieri-
 cho, of whom he begat Boaz. Boaz signifieth in strength

Mat. 1. 3. who was borne about the time of the deliuerance of
 Iud. 3. 16. Iewes, from the tyranny of the Moabites by the hande
 of lame Ehud; by which meanes they got strength, and
 remayned a long time in peace. Obed signifieth a ser-
 uant, who was borne as wee see in Ephratha Bethle-
 hem, his mother being Ruth the Moabireffe, the wo-
 men gaue him this name, because hee shoulde serue
 for the raising vp of Elimelech's family, the restoring
 of Naomies life, and the comfort of his parents; Bohaz
 and Ruth: Ischai, or Ishai the sonne of Obed, signifi-
 eth an oblation; and was borne about the dayes of
 Iipthach; and it may bee had his name giuen by rea-
 son of the vow of Iipthach, when he went against the
 Hammonites, that he would offer the first liuing thing
 that met him after he returned with the victorie, where-
 vpon his daughter meeting him, she liued in perpetu-
 all virginitie. Dauid the youngest sonne of Ischai,
 who no doubt was borne in the time of Heli, signifi-
 eth beloued, because commonly the youngest are best
 loued, or else his name did prophesie that hee shoulde
 be so loued of God, with whom he would establishe his
 couenant concerning Christ, and aduance him to the
 kingdome. By which wee may plainly see, that this
 Historie was written after he was chosen from his bre-
 thren and annointed to be king after Saule, or else the
 eldest Sonne of Ischai, should haue beene named be-
 cause of his birth-right belonged to him.

Lastly, by this we may gather, that the foundation
 of the Gospell must bee searched for in the olde Testa-
 ment for this Genealogie, as all the other of Christ is
 taken from thence, and the Apostle defining the Gos-
 pell, saith that God had promised it before by the Pro-
 phets, in the holy Scriptures, that is in the olde Testa-
 ment: and therefore it was needfull, for Mathew to
 begin his Gospell with the Genealogie of Christ, from
 Abraham and Dauid who had most liuely promises of
 his incarnation, also Marke and Luke begin with Iohn
 Baptist who was the promised Eliah, and the forerun-
 ner of Christ according as before it was prophesied and
 Iohn fetcheth it from the creation and beginning
 of

Rom. 1. 2.

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of the worlde, as it appeareth in the entraunce of his Gospell. By which we may see the hope of the fathers for the comming of Christ, to bee the same with ours, and had the liuely promises thereof reuealed in the law and the prophets. Secondly, the heauenly agreement that is betweene the olde Testament and the new, for there he was promised, thence he was proued to be the Messiah, all the Prophets giue witnesse vnto him, now he is exhibited, humbled, and aduanced to the highest degree, the gouernment, heauen and earth: sitting at the right hande of God, making intercession for his Saintes, working in the calling of his seruantes, with the ministerie of his word, disposing all things to the damnation of the wicked, and the saluation of the godly. Now let vs giue praise to God.

FINIS.

